



Research Article

Comparative Effectiveness of Chlorantraniliprole and Neem Leaf Extract against Fall Armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J.E. Smith) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

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Abstract | Fall armyworm (FAW), *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J.E. Smith) (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) is a destructive insect pest of various economic crops. This species was first reported in Pakistan during 2019, and is now an emerging threat to Pakistan's Agriculture. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the efficacy of a synthetic insecticide Chlorantraniliprole in comparison to different concentrations of single botanical, i.e., neem leaf extract @ (50 ppm and 100 ppm) against FAW larvae in maize. Our findings showed a significant effect ($P < 0.001$) of these chemicals on the mortality and consumption rate of FAW larvae. Results show that mortality increased in all treatments with time. Recommended dose of chlorantraniliprole (50 ml/100 litre water) insecticide showed 71.0% mortality of FAW on 5th day, which increased up to 82.0% on the 7th day after application of treatments. No significant ($P > 0.05$) difference in larval mortality was observed for chlorantraniliprole (recommended dose) and neem at 100ppm on the 5th and 7th day after application. Higher concentration (100ppm) of neem showed 59.0% mortality of FAW larvae on 5th and 72.0% on the seventh day of application. Chlorantraniliprole reduced 62.9% food consumption on the 5th day and 71.9% on the 7th day, while 43.5% on the 5th day and 51.6% on the 7th day reduction in food consumption occurred at 100 ppm when compared to the control group. While using 50ppm concentration of neem extract, 20.90% and 27.35% consumption rate was reduced at 5th and 7th day respectively. Our findings suggest chlorantraniliprole as an effective insecticide to control FAW larvae in maize crop; however, neem extract at 100 ppm concentration also performed well against this pest. As botanicals have less harmful to humans and the environment than synthetic insecticides, neem leaf extract can be used in integrated pest management programs of FAW.

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Keywords | *Spodoptera frugiperda*, Consumption rate, Botanical, Mortality, Chlorantraniliprole



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Introduction

Fall armyworm (FAW), *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J.E. Smith) (Noctuidae: Lepidoptera) is a destructive insect pest of various economic crops worldwide (Georgen *et al.*, 2016; Naeem-Ullah *et al.*, 2019). It feeds on more than 80 plant species in which maize, cotton, rice, millet, and sorghum are preferred hosts (Montezano *et al.*, 2018; FAO, 2018; Abrahams *et al.*, 2017; Clark *et al.*, 2007; Prowell *et al.*, 2004; Sena *et al.*, 2003). The most damaging FAW stage is larvae that feed on leaves, and lateral instars damage every part of the plant (Abrahams *et al.*, 2017). Due to its attack, the plant's photosynthetic area reduces, and it also directly damages the grains (Chimweta *et al.*, 2020). The first time FAW was reported in tropical and subtropical regions of America (FAO, 2018). During 2016, FAW caused severe yield losses of the corn crop in the different areas of Africa (Rose *et al.*, 2000; Goergen *et al.*, 2016; Abrahams *et al.*, 2017; Cock *et al.*, 2017), and about 98% of corn growers were affected (Day *et al.*, 2017; Cock *et al.*, 2017). This pest causes a loss of 400 million dollars every year in Brazil (Cruz, 2008). In India, it was reported in May 2018, and its presence was also confirmed in Thailand and Myanmar (Kalleshwaraswamy *et al.*, 2018; Guo *et al.*, 2018). In April 2019, FAW was first observed in the Sindh province of Pakistan (Naeem-Ullah *et al.*, 2019). So, the management of this devastating pest is of utmost importance.

The management strategy, primarily used to control FAW is the use of Genetically Modified Crops and synthetic insecticides (Sisay *et al.*, 2019), but resistant development in this pest has been reported against several groups of synthetic insecticides (Abrahams *et al.*, 2017) due to repeated applications of insecticides (Gutierrez-Moreno *et al.* 2019). Synthetic insecticides are available resources to control this pest, which is a significant achievement of modern agricultural practices and improves crop yield. A novel insecticide, chlorantraniliprole target on the ryanodine receptors of insects. In the result of ryanodine receptors binding, Ca^{+2} extensively produced. Due to high production of Ca^{+2} insects paralyzed and leads to death (Lahm *et al.*, 2005; Cordova *et al.*, 2007). Lepidopteran insect pests are being controlled by chlorantraniliprole (Liu *et al.*, 2017). Indiscriminate use of pesticides to produce and protect plants causes toxic effects by contact, inhalation, and food exposure, leading to carcinogenesis, reproductive problems, and mutagenesis in hu-

mans (Kazem and El-Shereif, 2010; Lozowicka *et al.*, 2015). These conditions have led to searching for other valuable and eco-friendly approaches, especially natural plant sources (Fetoh and Asiry, 2012). Various botanicals are readily available and inexpensive and available to the agricultural community; they are safer for humans and the environment with little residual effect and are less toxic to mammals (Isman, 2006; Koul *et al.*, 2008).

Neem plant (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss) belongs to the family Meliaceae is originated from Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent (Brahmachari, 2004; Campos *et al.*, 2016). Each part of neem plants produces active secondary compounds used previously to control insect pests (Amaral *et al.*, 2018). This plant has more than 100 active biological compounds, such as terpenoids, and azadirachtin (Hossain *et al.*, 2013; Campos *et al.*, 2016), which have insecticidal, repellent, and antifeedant properties and are very useful to suppress the population of insects (Isman, 2006; Mordue and Nisbet, 2000; Martinez, 2002). This plant has been considered a very useful in integrated pest management program (De Franca *et al.*, 2017). Keeping in view the importance of the neem plant as a botanical insecticide, its efficacy was compared with new chemistry insecticide chlorantraniliprole against FAW larvae.

Materials and Methods

Rearing of Spodoptera frugiperda (J.E. Smith 1797)

FAW larvae and egg batches were collected from the maize field nearby the University of Sargodha, Pakistan (32°09'04.0"N 72°43'26.4"E). To establish a large colony, FAW larvae were fed on fresh young leaves of maize. However, once the colony was established, an artificial diet was provided to larvae. The artificial diet was prepared using maize leaf powder, bean powder, brewer's yeast, sorbic acid, ascorbic acid, vitamin E tablets, methyl-p-hydroxybenzoate, sucrose, agar, and formaldehyde by using the method suggested by Parsanna *et al.* (2018). The larvae were fed on an artificial diet till pupation. The pupae were then placed in a plastic jar lined with cotton. The adult pairs were kept in the adult rearing cages and fed with 10% (w/v) sugar solution. The egg batches were separated and placed in glass Petri dishes that were sterilized before use. Regularly, egg batches were observed until hatching. Neonate larvae were provided with soft foliage of maize leaves to feed. The 3rd instar larvae were

placed in the plastic petri dishes individually to avoid the cannibalism. The F₃ generation larvae were used in the experiment.

Insecticide

A new chemistry insecticide, chlorantraniliprole 20 SC, was purchased from the local market of Sargodha, and the recommended dose (50 ml/100litre water) was tested against FAW larvae in lab.

Collection and preparation of plant extract

Fresh leaves of neem, *Azadirachta indica* were collected from the field near by Sargodha University. Leaves were shade-dried for twenty days. Dried leaves were ground to a fine powder and kept in Laboratory at room temperature. 100 g of neem leaves powder was mixed in 1 L of water in a conical flask to make a stock solution (10% w/v). The mixture was agitated for one hour using an electric shaker (KS130, Germany). The solution was filtered using Whatman no. 1 filter paper before use. The solvent was evaporated using a rotary vacuum evaporator, and the extract was stored in the refrigerator at 4 °C for one month before use (Kumar *et al.*, 2011).

Leaf-Dip bioassay

The experiment was performed in the laboratory of the Department of Entomology, University of Sargodha, Pakistan. Field recommended dose chlorantraniliprole (50 ml/100 litre) and two concentrations of *A. indica* extract (50 ppm and 100 ppm) were used in the bioassay. Water was used in the control treatment. The treatments were replicated three times, and 15 larvae were used in each replication totaling 45 larvae/treatment. Leaf dip bioassay was used to assess the mortality of FAW larvae. Maize leaves were collected from the field and washed with distilled water. The leaves were cut into pieces and dipped in the solutions for 10 seconds and left to dry for 10 minutes at room temperature. Third instar larvae of FAW were collected from the already developed culture in lab and kept them starving for 24 hours before releasing them into the Petri dishes. Maize leaves were changed daily, and feces were removed. The weight of leaves before and after the feeding of FAW was recorded to evaluate the consumption rate. The consumption rate of FAW was recorded using the formula given by Waldbauer (1968).

$$C.I = \frac{F}{TA}$$

Where;

C.I: Consumption index; F: Fresh or dry weight of food eaten; T: Duration of feeding period (days); A: Mean fresh or dry weight of insects during feeding period.

Mortality data of FAW was recorded at 1, 3, 5, and 7 days after application. Mortality data was corrected using Abbott's formula (Abbott, 1925).

Data analysis

Larval mortality and consumption data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA, and means were separated by Tukey HSD all-pairwise comparison test. All the analyses were performed using SPSS 20.0 software.

Results and Discussion

Chlorantraniliprole at recommended dose rate (50 ml/100litre water) and neem extracts at two different concentrations (50ppm and 100ppm) were tested against 3rd instar larvae of FAW under laboratory conditions.

There was a significant effect of treatments on mortality of *S. furgiperda* on 1st (F = 128.0, P < 0.001), 3rd (F = 561.0, P < 0.001), 5th (F = 76.9, P < 0.001) and 7th (F = 99.1, P < 0.001) day after application. Over time, mortality was increased. Chlorantraniliprole insecticide showed 71.0% mortality of FAW on the 5th day, and it was increased up to 82.0% on the 7th day. No significant (P > 0.05) difference was observed for chlorantraniliprole and neem @ 100ppm on the 5th and seventh day. Higher concentration (100ppm) of neem showed 59.0% mortality of FAW larvae on the 5th and 72.0% on the seventh day of application. Neem (50ppm) showed 35.0% mortality of FAW larvae on the 5th and 42.0% on the seventh day of application. In the control treatment, no mortality was found (Figure 1).

Larval Consumption rate was calculated and it was found that A significant effect of treatments was found on consumption rate of FAW on 1st (F = 496.0, P < 0.001), 3rd (F = 421.0, P < 0.001), 5th (F = 289.0, P < 0.001) and 7th (F = 439.0, P < 0.001) day after application. The consumption rate was found to be higher on 1st day (220.0 mg), on 3rd day (260.0 mg), on 5th day (310.0 mg) and on 7th day (385.0 mg) in control treatment. Chlorantraniliprole reduced 62.9% consumption on 5th day and 71.9% on 7th day when

compared to control group. Similarly, neem 100 ppm reduced 43.5% on 5th day and 51.6% on 7th day compared to control. While using 50ppm concentration of neem extract, 20.90% and 27.35% consumption rate was reduced at 5th and 7th day respectively (Figure 2).

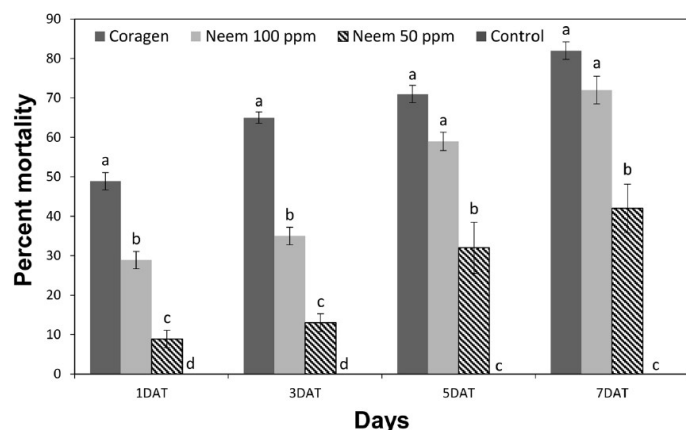


Figure 1: Percent mortality (means \pm SE) of *Spodoptera frugiperda* after application of coragen and neem extract mean and sharing similar letters across treatments for each time interval are not significant at $P>0.05$.

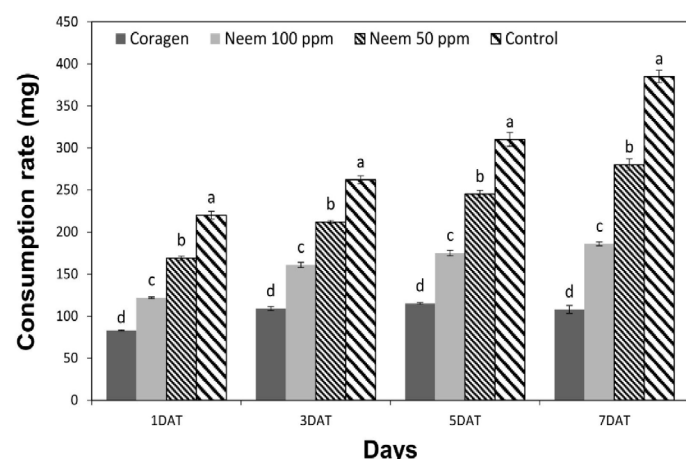


Figure 2: Food consumption (means \pm SE) of *Spodoptera frugiperda* larvae after application of coragen and neem extract mean and sharing similar letters across treatments for each time interval are not significant at $P>0.05$.

Synthetic insecticides are becoming a big problem for the environment; that is why plant-based insecticides are being used to control different insect pests, including armyworms. For the management of insect pests, the botanical extracts showed an effective control. Many plant extracts have a repellent effect against different damaging insect pests (Pang *et al.*, 2020).

We used neem extract at 50 and 100 ppm concentrations in comparison to Chlorantraniliprole insecticide against FAW 3rd instar larvae. Our findings showed that insecticide showed higher mortality of

FAW larvae than neem extract. However, no significant difference in larval mortality was observed using insecticide and higher concentration (100ppm) of neem at 5th and 7th day post treatment interval. Various Lepidopteran pests are highly susceptible to Chlorantraniliprole insecticide (Cao *et al.*, 2010; Pereira, 2013), a registered insecticide against many Lepidopteran non-Lepidopteran pests (Lutz *et al.*, 2018). Chlorantraniliprole attacks insects' ryanodine receptors and disturbs the calcium homeostasis in the cells, resulting in feeding cessation, muscle paralysis, lethargy, and ultimately death of that insect (Lahm *et al.*, 2005). Armyworm larvae had a high potential to resist Chlorantraniliprole (Muthusamy *et al.*, 2014). Further research is needed on whether moths can quickly develop resistance to chlorantraniliprole.

Our findings showed that neem extract at 100 ppm concentration also showed effectiveness as a synthetic insecticide. There was no significant effect in mortality due to neem 100ppm and insecticide after 5 and 7 days of application. Neem plant belonging to the family Meliaceae has been reported for its potential as bio-insecticide (Verma *et al.*, 2007; Montes-Molina *et al.*, 2008; Javed *et al.*, 2008; Anjorin *et al.*, 2008; Farooq *et al.*, 2011). The neem plant's insecticidal properties are due to azadirachtin, a widely known, effective insecticide (Zheng *et al.*, 2011). Neem, Azadirachtin can control many insect pests, including fall armyworm (Nisbet, 2000; Silva *et al.*, 2015). The damaging properties of neem extract on insect pests are highly effective and complex molecule azadirachtin (Viana *et al.*, 2007). Azadirachtin is an environment-friendly, non-mutagenic, selective, and easily decomposable, having minimal effect on mammals, and it could be an outstanding alternate for the management of FAW (Campos *et al.*, 2012).

Chlorantraniliprole insecticide and neem extract at the concentration of 100ppm caused a significant reduction in the feeding activity of FAW. In agreement with our observations, other studies also demonstrated the deterrent effects of *A. indica* (Lehman *et al.*, 2007; Montes-Molina *et al.*, 2008; Sharma *et al.*, 2008; Hernández-Lambrano *et al.*, 2014). *Azadirachta indica* shows antifeedant properties against many lepidopteran pests (Liang *et al.*, 2003; Roel *et al.*, 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Fall armyworm (FAW), *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J.E.

Smith) (Noctuidae: Lepidoptera) is a very destructive insect pest of various economic crops. The chlorantraniliprole is an effective synthetic insecticide to control FAW larvae, however, neem extract at 100 ppm concentration also performed well against this pest. As botanicals are less harmful to humans and the environment than synthetic insecticides, neem leaf extract @ 100ppm can be used in integrated pest management programs of FAW.

Novelty Statement

The findings showed that chlorantraniliprole and neem extract at 100 ppm concentration performed well to control FAW' larvae. As botanicals have less harmful to humans and the environment than synthetic insecticides, neem leaf extract can be used in integrated pest management programs of FAW.

Authors' Contributions

Hamza Latif, Muhammad Zeeshan, and Gulfam Yousuf: Performed experiments.

Muhammad Irfan Ullah, Nimra Altaf and Muhammad Arshad: Wrote the manuscript.

Muhammad Afzal and Muhammad Zeeshan Majeed: Designed the experiment.

Muhammad Arshad and Nimra Altaf: Analyzed the data.

Conflict of interest

All authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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