## False codling moth on chillies

**Thaumatotibia leucotreta**

### Prevention

- Use mesh or net barriers to keep the pest out of the crop when possible

### Monitoring

- Start monitoring when the chilli fruits start developing as the larvae only attack the fruits
- **Insect:**
  - Eggs are less than 1 mm long, oval, flattened and difficult to see. They are laid singly or in group on the developing fruits
  - Larvae are yellowish-white when young with dark spots. The full grown larva is about 15 mm long, bright red or pink, with a yellow-brown head. The young larvae mine fruit just beneath the surface, or bore into the skin causing premature ripening of the fruit
  - The pupa (5-7 mm long) is contained within a tough silken cocoon and can be seen in the soil or amongst plant debris
  - Adult moths are 15-16 mm (males) and 19-20 mm (female) in length. Forewings have grey, brown, black and orange-brown markings. False codling moth can look similar to other moths but can be distinguished by the triangular marking near the edges of the wings
  - Open fallen fruits to detect the presence of the larvae. It is important to destroy the fruits after inspection by burning or burying to a depth of 60-90 cm
  - Monitor adults with traps baited with a pheromone attractant and inspect the traps each week. If any moths are detected once the fruits are developing, take control measures immediately

### Direct Control

- Control is difficult because the moth has many alternative hosts so reinfection is likely to occur
- Hand pick the mature larvae from the crop
- If available, spray a mating disruption pheromone into the crop to stop the males and females from mating
- Destroy fruits that are infested and have fallen to the ground to reduce the build-up cycle and avoid carrying over the pest to the next season. Put the fruits in plastic bags and expose them to the sunlight, or burn and bury to a depth of 60-90 cm

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Note: Pesticides may be available to control this pest. Please check with the Ministry of Agriculture in your country to find out which pesticides are registered in your country and the local restrictions for their use.