Special Report on Army Worm infestation of crop fields in some of World Vision South Sudan operational locations

Former Warrap and Northern Bhar El Ghazal States
Our field staff in the former Warrap and Northern Bhar El Ghazal States have not received reports of infestation of the fall army worm or other types of caterpillars/worms.

Malakal, Fashoda and Manyo Counties
World Vision has received reports from its field staff regarding serious crop damage by suspected fall armyworms (figure below) as well as grass hoppers. The areas facing the pest (armyworms and grass hopper) invasion are Malakal, Balliet, Fashoda Manyo and Renk Counties. The most affected crops are sorghum and maize but a variety of vegetable crops have also been invaded by the pests. The dames are widespread and cannot be measured without full scale assessment. However, there are fears of a significant number of farmers having lost the entire fields/season crops.

According to a report from the DG of the Ministry of Agriculture in Northern Upper Nile, farmers in Renk county have confirmed the presence of the army worms, but that they are still in larva stages of growing. In Mustgebel Boma, Wadikona payam in Manyo county (opposite Renk town) farmers confirmed that the army worm is present.

World Vision South Sudan is currently responding by training farmers on organic pest management methods in these project targeted locations. These training include identification of local pests and effects on plants/crops, production of botanical pesticides (medicinal neem tree leaves, red pepper, ash, burning cow dung and cow urine), and crop husbandry practices of pest management, such as intercropping, crop rotation, and live fencing among others.

The training on organic pest management practices is however not proving very effective in reversing the infestation trend partly due to high level/number of armyworms to effectively be controlled by the approach. Secondly most farmers are not used to the approach which takes time to adopt. A few especially lead farmers making efforts to use the approach have reported reduction in infestation on their fields though not very significant.
Farmers in the affected areas are fearing that they might lose their crop and will be negatively affected by hunger as a result. Some are recalling what happened to them many years back when the entire community was affected by armyworm to the point that people were displaced to neighboring regions.

We recommend that an assessment team be sent to the affected areas and conduct through assessment of the damage and come up with recommended intervention/response.
Maize crop infestation in Mustgebel Boma, Wadikona Payam – Northern Manyo County

Some more photos taken by the Melut team in Northern Upper Nile: