

Key found in fight against farm pest diamondback moth

Scientists have uncovered the “evolutionary trick” of one of the world’s worst agricultural pests, the diamondback moth.

Diamondback moths wreak billions of dollars worth of damage to crops around the world each year and cost producers around the world \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year in crop loss and control measures each year, and have caused major problems for Australia’s canola industry.

The caterpillars feed on cabbage and related plants and are difficult to control because they can quickly develop resistance to all types of insecticide.

“They have an incredible ability to migrate long distances and to quickly adapt to the environments they encounter, making outbreaks of these insects difficult to predict and control,” Dr Baxter said.

“This project has helped identify the genes that make diamondback moth such a successful pest and will enable new insecticide resistance monitoring techniques and pest management strategies to be developed.”

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