SOME POST HARVEST INSECT PESTS THAT THREATEN FOOD SECURITY

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Introduction

• Factors such as storage duration, prevailing environmental conditions and crop varieties influence insect populations development and losses incurred.
• Inadequate storage methods lead to losses in stored grain sometimes of unacceptable magnitude in SSA.
• These pests inflict both direct and indirect damage to the grain, and the most important ones start in the field.
Damage caused

Direct damage
- Kernel damage,
- Contamination,
- Grain dust,
- Damage to wooden structures and other containers

Indirect damage
- Dry grain heating and moisture migration in storage
- Lowered germination of seed grains
- Distribution of molds and other organisms through the grain mass
- Insect fragments in cereal products
THE GRAIN MOTH (*Sitotroga cereallella* (ol.))

- Small straw coloured moth (wing span 10-18mm)
- Able to fly from infested grain in store to the field
- Infests maturing cereals in the field
- Infestation can also occur at store levels.
- Damage: small circular ‘windows’ and holes on the grain
- Causes severe damage to cereals stored mainly in unthreshed form
- Grain attacked: maize, sorghum, wheat, paddy & barley.
SITOTROGA CEREALELLA
(Angoumois Grain Moth)
MAIZE AND RICE WEEVILS
(Sitophilus spp.)

- Dark brown weevils (2.5-4.5mm long)
- Able to fly from infested grain in store to the field.
- Infests maturing cereals in the field
- Infestation can also occur at store level
- Damage: Small circular holes on the surface of the grain
- Causes severe damage to grain stored in both threshed and unthreshed form
- Grain attacked: maize, millet, sorghum, wheat, barley and rice
SITOPHILUS spp.
(Maize and Rice Weevils)
LARGER GRAIN BORER

(Prostephanus truncantus)(H.)

- A dark brown cylindrical beetle (3-4.5mm long)
- Able to fly form infested grain in store to the field
- Infests maize in the field before harvest
- Infestation can also occur at store level
- The beetle eats tunnels and holes in the husks, grain and cob.
- Very serious pest that also eats into the wooden store structures
- Also feeds on dried cassava
PROSTEHANUS TRUNCATUS
(Larger Grain Borer)
PULSE BRUCHIDS (BEETLES)

• THE BEAN BRUCHID (Acanthoscelides obtectus (say)).
• Grey to brown oval beetles (3 – 4.5mm long)
• Able to fly from infested grain the store to the field
• Infestation can also occur at store level
• Damage: small dark ‘windows’ and holes on the grain
• Causes serious damage to stored beans
ACANTHOSCELIDES OBTECTUS
(Bean Beetle)
THE COWPEA BRUCHIDS
\((Callosobruchus\ spp)\)

- Light to dark brown beetles (2.0-3.5mm long)
- Able to fly from infested grain in stores to the field
- Infests maturing legumes (cowpea, pigeon peas, chick peas and grains) in the field
- Infestation can also occur at store level
- Small dark ‘windows’ and holes on the grain indicate infestation by the bruchids
- Causes serious damage to stored pulses.
Callosobruchus spp.
THE FLOUR BEETLE
(Tribolium spp)

- Reddish brown flat beetles (2.5 – 4.5mm long)
- Infests stored (broken) grain and milled products
- Causes high level of gram contamination
- Presence of reddish brown beetles, cast skins and faecal pellets on damaged grain and milled products indicates infestation by these beetles.
- Serious secondary pests of all stored grain and milled grain products
TRIBOLIUM CASTANEUM
(Rust-Red Flour Beetle)
**EPHESTIA** spp.  
(Tropical Warehouse Moths)

Several species of *Ephestia* may be encountered in tropical stores. They attack a wide range of products particularly damaged or processed cereals, dried fruit, nuts, cocoa and even tobacco. Only the larvae feed. They also leave trails of silk which can form a thick webbing over and in the stored food. Reconditioning food to remove webbing can be very costly.  
(Wing span 11-28 mm)
Some Management Practices

Post-havest Insect pest control should begin before the crop is mature and must definitely begin before it is harvested and put in drying structures.

Proper program for insect control include:

• Select plant varieties with good husk cover and inherent resistance to field and storage pests
• Repair the store and thoroughly clean before the new crop is mature.
• Clear the surroundings of the store of any waste that can harbor insect pests
• Harvest early to avoid field infestation
• Dry the grain as fast as possible and shell it when dry
• Shell carefully to avoid damage to the kernels
• Treat the dry grain with an appropriate insecticide
• Carry out regular inspections of the stored grain to detect any infestation and take control measures as necessary

• Carry out principles of good store management, including maintenance, stock rotation and hygiene.