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Incidence of *Antigastra catalaunalis* Dup. (sesame webworm) (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae*)* at Aralaganwila in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka

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Antigastra catalaunalis Duponchel (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae) was identified as the most important pest of sesame, *Sesamum indicum* crop in extensively cultivated areas in Sri Lanka. Farmers usually ignore pest incidences, as they cannot afford control measures. Seasonality of larval population and damage was monitored on biweekly intervals in monthly-planted 3 sesame plots that were maintained

under pesticide free conditions in the research field at the Regional Agricultural Research and Development Center, Aralaganwila. The larval population and damage were slightly higher during mid February to mid April and reached a higher peak during the period from mid June to September. The larval damages, webbing of leaves, defoliation, eating of flower buds and flowers and pod boring were most severe during the peak period and lower during the rest of the periods. Larval infestation was 39% and 32% on young seedlings at 3 and 5 weeks after sowing (WAS) and 9% when the crop was at blooming (7 WAS) and flowering (9 WAS) stage and 7% and 3% at 11 and 13 weeks age (in older crop). *Trathala flavoorbitalis* (Cameron), the major parasitoid of the pest predominantly appeared in the area during August and September. Predominant predators associated with the crop included several species of spiders (Araneae), coccinelids and grasshoppers. Crops established in March could escape from the damages of the pest.

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