

Letter to the Editor

¿*Heliothis virescens* (FABRICIUS) OR *Heliothis tergeminus* (FELDER AND ROGENHOFER)?

Dear Mr.

In the tobacco crop (*Nicotiana tabacum*, Lin.), the principal pest is known as tobacco budworm, a species scientifically named as *Heliothis virescens* (Fab.). However, studies in Venezuela and Colombia show the presence of a species complex, traditionally identified as *H. virescens*, which additionally comprises the species *Heliothis tergeminus* (Felder and Rogenhofner, 1872) and *Heliothis subflexus* (Guenée, 1852), the last one only reported on plants of the genus *Physalis*.

Although adults of these species can be confused one to another, because of their similarity in size and color, there are some differences in the wing design that can be used as an element of discrimination between them.

The study of the wing morphology of adults obtained in collections of larvae made in agricultural areas of the municipality Jesus Menendez, Las Tunas, in the tobacco campaigns of 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, the use of pictorial keys and other sources related to the description of the species within the *Heliothis* complex, suggested the existence of *H. tergeminus*, which could be the first report of this species in Cuba.

These results indicate the need for a revision of the species *H. virescens* (Fab.) in the country, recognized as the tobacco budworm once other collateral studies allowing reconfirming the presence in Cuba of the species *H. tergeminus* had concluded.

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