

CHARACTERIZING THE MODE OF RESISTANCE INHERITANCE AND CROSS RESISTANCE IN PINK BOLLWORM AGAINST CRY1AC TOXIN AND ORGANOPHOSPHATE PESTICIDES IN PAKISTAN

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In this study, resistance inheritance and cross resistance to Cry1Ac toxin and the insecticide triazophos in the pink bollworm (*Pectinophora gossypiella*) was investigated. F₁ progeny were simultaneously backcrossed with susceptible parents to obtain F₂ progeny without genetic resistance against the Cry1Ac toxin and insecticide triazophos. In two sets of experiments, Cry1Ac/triazophos-resistant pink bollworms (Cry1Ac-R/Triazo-R) were selected through six generations and were reciprocally crossed with susceptible laboratory strains (Cry1Ac-S/Triazo-S). Resistance ratios for reciprocal crosses of Cry1Ac and triazophos were 16.25 and 27.11, respectively, while Resistant Parent RR values showing cross resistance were 10.51 and 6.50 folds, respectively. F₁ progeny were again back-crossed with susceptible parents to prove the phenomena of refuge strategy instantaneously reducing the resistance developed in pink bollworms. Parents, F₁ and F₂ progenies were tested for their LC₅₀ values. Results of cross resistance for Cry1Ac showed, dominance value of resistance was below 1, proving that resistance was completely recessive but autosomal in nature and was controlled by more than one gene. For triazophos, dominance was also autosomal but was dependent on concentration, i.e., at low concentration it was incompletely dominant, at middle concentration, partially recessive; while at higher concentration it was completely recessive. These findings are helpful for pink bollworm control in Bt cotton expressing Cry1Ac combined with insecticides spray.

Keywords: Pink bollworm, cross resistance, toxicity, resistance development.

INTRODUCTION

A pest population that exhibits a significantly lower mortality response to a pesticide than a normal population dose is considered resistant (Georghiou, 1986). Resistance development to insecticides, in insects, was first reported by Melander (1914). Since, then, different strategies have been employed to manage insect pests including resistant hybrids, biological control using predators and parasitoids, and cultural control, in an effort to overcome resistance development. Likewise, transgenic crops were developed, which have achieved high levels of control against the target pests, thereby reducing pesticide applications and increasing profits (Mendelsohn *et al.*, 2003; National Research Council, USA 2010). Today, more than 90% of countries have adopted biotech crops (James, 2017)

The evolution of resistance is a primary threat to the continuous success of transgenic crops (Tabashnik, 1994). Similar to pesticides, selection pressures on insects may result in resistance development to transgenic crops. Target pests have already developed resistance to transgenic crops under laboratory and field conditions (Huang *et al.*, 1997; Bolin *et*

al., 1999; Chaufaux *et al.*, 2001; Ferre and van Rie, 2002; Gasteiger *et al.*, 2003; Siqueira *et al.*, 2004; Ali *et al.*, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2007; Van Rensburg 2007; Tabashnik *et al.*, 2008; Pereira *et al.*, 2008). Lepidopteran pests have also developed resistance to Bt cotton in Pakistan (reviewed by Alvi *et al.*, 2012; Akhtar *et al.*, 2018). As a result, pests such as rice stem borers (Qu *et al.*, 2003) have shown high levels of resistance against the organophosphate pesticide triazophos.

To control pink bollworm, different strategies including pesticides, sterile insect techniques, Bt cotton, cultural practices, and sex pheromones are used successfully (Hoy 2019). Among these techniques, transgenic cotton expressing Cry1Ac is the primary tool. Resistance to Cry1Ac expressing Bt cotton has been reported in China (Wan *et al.*, 2012), USA (Tabashnik *et al.*, 2000a), and Pakistan (Akhtar *et al.*, 2016). However, pink bollworm has also developed resistance to organophosphate pesticides sprayed in fields of Bt cotton in Pakistan (Akhtar *et al.*, 2018a; Akhtar *et al.*, 2018b). Cross resistance was observed in the lepidopteran pest, cotton bollworm, in Pakistan, in which Cry1Ac was tested for cross resistance with spore forming λ -endotoxin (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006).

Our hypothesis is also based on the assumption that, there is cross resistance among toxin resistant and insecticide resistant strains of pink bollworms. In order to develop an effective Integrated Resistance Management (IRM) strategy it was important to use Mendalian crosses to determine the resistance inheritance pattern or type, in laboratory selected target pest populations in which we crossed homozygous susceptible to homozygous resistant to achieve heterozygous populations on which to conduct bioassays. Through these crosses and using diet incorporated toxin bioassay, our target was to determine maternal sex linkage and dominance of resistance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Insect collection and rearing conditions: Insects resistant and susceptible to Bt cotton were collected from fields, which were un-sprayed. While insects resistant and susceptible to insecticide were collected from fields sprayed with triazophos at the Research Farm of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Cotton at boll formation was collected and these bolls were brought to the laboratory where larvae were removed and reared on artificial diet. Almost 2000 larvae were collected and were reared on artificial diet (Jothi *et al.*, 2016), having Cry1Ac Bt toxin. Temperature was 27±1°C, RH was above 70% and D:L period was kept at 16:8.

Artificial diet and toxin: Diet was prepared as described by (Jothi *et al.*, 2016) but was modified. Ingredients were: meshed seed meal, caesine, sorbic acid, L-sorbic acid, and distilled water. Cry1Ac was added as a freeze dried formulation of MVP II containing approximately 20% Cry1Ac protoxin of Bt *kurstaki* encapsulated by transgenic *Pseudomonas fluorescence* (Mycogen corporation, San Diego, CA) (Alvi *et al.*, 2012).

Insecticide formulations: The recommended dose of Triazophos 40% EC for cotton is 2 ml/litre, sprayed at 500-1000 ml/acre. Recommended active ingredients are 10 percent per litre.

Insect strain selection: Larvae were collected from the field were feed artificial diet mixed with Cry1Ac at different concentrations for six generations. Formulations for selective experiments are as in Table. 1. Bioassays were conducted for surviving insect generations. Susceptible generations were also collected from the field and reared on artificial diet without the Bt toxin for six generations.

For the triazophos selection experiment, field collected larvae were reared on non-Bt cotton sprayed with triazophos through sixth generations. Surviving larvae were used in the bioassays. Formulations for the experiments were as in Table. 2. Susceptible larvae were also collected from the field and were kept on non-Bt cotton for six generations and were also used for bioassays.

Table 1. History of selection to produce Cry1Ac selected strain of pink bollworm

Generation	Concentration µg/g	Number exposed	Number dead	%mortality
G1	28	2000	803	40.15
G2	30	1000	52	5.20
G3	35	1015	46	4.53
G4	38	1100	30	2.72
G5	42	1070	7	0.65
G6	45	1000	2	0.20

Table 2. History of selection to produce triazophos selected strain of pink bollworm

Generation	Concentration µg/ml	Number exposed	Number dead	%mortality
G1	110	1500	577	38.46
G2	130	1090	56	5.13
G3	150	1000	35	3.50
G4	170	1200	21	1.75
G5	190	950	11	1.15
G6	210	1050	1	0.09

Bioassay: Concentrations used were lower for susceptible strains and higher for resistant strains. Larvae surviving after seven days were recorded.

Statistical analysis

Evolution of resistance:

Using POLO plus (LeOra 1987), probit regression lines were drawn on concentration responses from each Mendalian cross. The results were produced in terms of LC₅₀ values with 95%FL, Chi-Squared (X²), slope with standard error, which were used to check data for reliability and RR ratio, which stands for 50% larvae killed in relation to a susceptible strain with a 95% CI.

Maternal Sex linkage: F₁ and the slope of the LC₅₀ of the F₁ progeny was considered in the context of maternal sex linkage of inheritance. Reciprocal crosses were made between susceptible and resistant strains of pink bollworms. To consider the better cross, pupae were separated for gender and kept in cages for crosses.

Degree of dominance: Degree of dominance was calculated from the modified formula

$$D = (2XT - XRR - XSS) / (XRR - XSS) \text{ (Stone 1968)}$$

D = Degree of dominance, XT = Phenotypic value of homozygote, XRR = Phenotypic value of heterozygote, XSS = Phenotypic value of other homozygote, log LC₅₀ of reciprocal cross, Range of dominance from -1 (complete recessive resistance) to +1 (complete dominant resistance).

Effective dominance: Using the following formula, we calculated effective dominance *h*.

$$h = (W_{12} - W_{22}) / (W_{11} - W_{22})$$

h = effective dominance, W₁₁ = fitness of homozygous resistant parent, W₁₂ = fitness of the heterozygous offspring, W₂₂ = fitness of the homozygous susceptible parent, *h* varies from 0-1; 0.5 means co-dominance

Table3. Bioassay response of Cry1Ac and triazophos susceptible and resistant strains of pink bollworms to individual Cry1Ac and triazophos.

Strains	Bt toxin/pesticide	n ^a	LC ₅₀ / LD ₅₀ (95%FL)(µg/g)	Slope ±SE	χ ²	df (χ ²)	RR ^b
Cry1Ac-S	Cry1Ac	864	1.70(1.51-1.91)	3.57±0.21	36.10	16	-
Cry1Ac-R	Cry1Ac	864	27.63(20.34-38.65)	2.63±0.23	92.04	16	16.25
Triazo-S	Triazophos	864	1.87 (1.65-2.09)	3.71±0.24	32.85	16	-
Triazo-R	Triazophos	864	50.71(41.93-59.75)	3.52±0.29	50.29	16	27.11

n= number of larvae tested, RR^b Resistance ratio at LC50 having 95% confidence interval

Table4. Cross resistance of Cry1Ac and triazophos susceptible and resistant strains of pink bollworms to individual triazophos and Cry1Ac

Strains	Bt toxin/pesticide	n ^a	LC ₅₀ / LD ₅₀ (95%FL)(µg/g)	Slope ±SE	χ ²	df (χ ²)	RR ^b
Cry1Ac-S	Triazophos	864	1.45(1.21-1.63)	5.36±0.47	66.6	16	-
Cry1Ac-R	Triazophos	864	15.25(13.1-17.83)	2.70±0.15	37.12	16	10.51
Triazo-S	Cry1Ac	864	1.55(1.34-1.78)	4.84±0.28	98.88	16	-
Triazo-R	Cry1Ac	864	10.09(8.80-11.44)	3.16±0.19	26.39	16	6.50

n= number of larvae tested, RR^b Resistance ratio at LC50 having 95% confidence interval

Table5. Reciprocal crosses between Cry1Ac, triazophos resistant and susceptible strains of pink bollworm showing dose response to individual toxins of Cry1Ie and Cry1Ab.

Strains	Cross	n	LC ₅₀ (95%FL) (µg/g)	Slope ±SE	χ ²	df (χ ²)
Cry1Ac-R	R♂ X S♀	864	8.12(6.27-10.74)	1.74±0.11	53.18	16
	S♂ X R♀	864	9.23(7.33-11.68)	2.14±0.16	48.92	16
Triazophos-R	R♂ X S♀	864	5.24(4.11-6.63)	2.31±0.13	63.54	16
	S♂ X R♀	864	4.89(4.43-4.76)	2.28±0.13	49.43	16

Monogenic resistance test using Chi square:

$$X^2 = \frac{(F-pn)^2}{pnq}$$

(Georghiou, 1969)

F= Observed mortality, p= Expected mortality, n= number of adults, q= 1-p

Null hypothesis will be rejected in cases where the expected mortality is significantly different than the observed mortality.

RESULTS

Evolution of resistance and selection: Pink bollworm larvae were selected with Cry1Ac and triazophos for six generations, separately. The mortality rate was decreased from 40.15 to 0.2% with Cry1Ac(Table. 1) and from 38.46 to 0.09 with triazophos (Table. 2).

Sex linkage: For Cry1Ac and triazophos resistant larvae the RR value was 16.25 and 27.11, respectively (Table. 3).

In the cross resistance experiment, RR for Cry1Ac resistant larvae for triazophos and triazophos resistant larvae for Cry1Ac was 10.51 and 6.5, respectively (Table. 4).

Dominance: Dominance was calculated in terms of h value. For both Cry1Ac and triazophos, h was higher at lower concentrations and lower at higher concentrations. It presents dominant to recessive resistance. Value varied from 0-1 while 0.5 was co-dominance (Tables 6&7).

Table6. Effective dominance of resistance to Cry1Ac in pink bollworms resistant, susceptible, and F1 progeny larvae.

Concentration	Strains	Survival%	Fitness h ^b
2.5	Cry1Ac-S	18.75	0.19
	Cry1Ac-R	97.91	1.00
	F1	52.08	0.53
5	Cry1Ac-S	0.00	0.00
	Cry1Ac-R	52.08	1.00
	F1	31.25	0.60
25	Cry1Ac-S	0.00	0.00
	Cry1Ac-R	20.83	1.00
	F1	0.00	0.00
50	Cry1Ac-S	0.00	0.00
	Cry1Ac-R	4.16	1.00
	F1	0.00	0.00

Monogenic vs polygenic: The number of loci involved in controlling genetic resistance to Cry1Ac showed that among all calculated and expected mortalities, at all concentrations, there was no significance, so resistance is autosomal (Table. 8). In the case of triazophos, resistance was also autosomal (Table. 9).

Table 7. Effective dominance of resistance to Triazophos in resistant, susceptible and F1 progeny of pink bollworm larvae.

Concentration	Strains	Survival%	Fitness	h ^b
2.5	Triazo-S	4.16	0.041	0.75
	Triazo-R	100	1	
	F1	83.33	0.83	
5	Triazo-S	0	0	0.60
	Triazo-R	100	1	
	F1	60.41	0.60	
50	Triazo-S	0	0	0
	Triazo-R	43.75	1	
	F1	0	0	
100	Triazo-S	0	0	0
	Triazo-R	0	1	
	F1	0	0	

Table8. Monogenic model for actual and expected mortality of pink bollworm using Cry1Ac.

Concentration µg/g	Actual mortality (%)	Expected mortality (%)	χ ²
F₁♀(S♀xR♂)xSS♂			
0.5	4.16	10.41	0.82
2.5	16.66	34.37	0.73
5	50.00	75.00	0.58
10	83.33	91.66	0.43
F₁♂(S♂xR♀)xSS♀			
0.5	2.08	7.29	0.92
2.5	16.66	30.20	0.68
5	41.66	70.83	0.29
10	77.08	88.54	0.53
SS♀x F₁♂(S♂xR♀)			
0.5	4.16	8.33	0.76
2.5	18.75	31.25	1.27
5	45.83	72.91	1.16
10	77.08	85.54	0.51
SS♂x F₁♀(S♀xR♂)			
0.5	0.00	9.37	1.05
2.5	14.58	32.29	1.83
5	50.00	73.95	1.01
10	68.75	84.37	0.63

DISCUSSION

Our results indicate that *h*, increased concentration; resulted in lower resistance, while lower concentrations resulted in greater resistance, resistance varied. Our results are in agreement with Wang *et al.* (2016; 2017), that dominance decreased with increased concentrations of Bt toxin. Crespo *et al.* 2009, studying European corn borer, also found that dominance was dependent on different levels of Bt toxin expression at different plant growth stages such as reproductive and vegetative. Tabashnik *et al.* (1990), found field developed resistance to Cry protein from maternal influence in diamond back moth, *Plutella xylostella*.

Table9. Monogenic model for actual and expected mortality of pink boll worms using triazophos.

Concentration µg/ml	Actual mortality (%)	Expected mortality (%)	χ ²
F₁♀(S♀xR♂)xSS♂			
0.5	12.50	18.75	0.60
2.5	37.50	50.00	0.26
5	83.33	91.66	0.36
10	100.00	100.00	0.27
F₁♂(S♂xR♀)xSS♀			
0.5	14.58	18.75	0.50
2.5	39.58	50.00	0.47
5	85.41	92.70	0.35
10	100.00	100.00	0.27
SS♀x F₁♂(S♂xR♀)			
0.5	18.75	19.79	0.33
2.5	41.66	52.08	0.46
5	87.50	93.75	0.33
10	100.00	100.00	0.27
SS♂x F₁♀(S♀xR♂)			
0.5	16.66	20.83	0.48
2.5	41.66	52.08	0.46
5	83.33	91.66	0.36
10	100.00	100.00	0.27

Refuge strategy is successfully used to delay resistance development in insects against Bt crops (Jinet *et al.*, 2015). Our studies, indicate that refuge strategy can delay resistance development in pink bollworm as backcross in the F₁ progeny resulted in reduced resistance as compared to parent resistant. Our results also agree with those of Tabashnik *et al.* (2000), in which a Cry1Ac resistant strain was found to show substantial resistance against other Bt toxins; in our studies Cry1Ac resistant pink bollworms showed resistance against triazophos. Khalique *et al.* (2006), found cross resistance of Cry1Ac against various spore forming Bt toxins in cotton bollworms. Alvi *et al.* (2012), found cross resistance in Cry1Ac against different insecticides in cotton bollworms. Similarly, maternal influence in field strains was also found associated with inheritance of Cry protein in *Ostrinia nubilalis*; it was identified from concentration mortality curves of reciprocal crosses (Crespo *et al.*, 2009).

Our experimental results show that the parents were homozygous resistant and susceptible while resulting F₁ progeny were a heterozygous population. These results are in agreement with other studies where F₁ progeny crosses showed that resistant alleles were expressed on susceptible laboratory reared population, while susceptible alleles were expressed on selected resistant laboratory reared population (Liu and Tabashnik, 1997; González-Cabrera *et al.*, 2001; Tabashnik *et al.*, 1997).

Conclusion: The back-cross of resistant strains with susceptible ones show that refuge strategy can work well in the case of Bt cotton sprayed with triazophos, as developed resistance can be reversible. With resistance being autosomal

these results support more production of Bt crops. The *h* value decreased with increased concentrations of triazophos suggesting that Bt cotton, with pesticide sprays, can be helpful in delaying resistance development in pink bollworm. We affirm that laboratory selected pink bollworm can develop minor levels of resistance against triazophos, and vice versa, which is at manageable levels if we follow a refuge strategy in Pakistan Bt cotton.

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