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Fabiana Britti Bacalhau

**PERFORMANCE DA SOJA QUE EXPRESSA AS PROTEÍNAS  
INSETICIDAS Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 e Cry1Ac PARA CONTROLE DE  
LEPIDÓPTEROS-PRAGA E MANEJO DA RESISTÊNCIA DE INSETOS**

Santa Maria, RS

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Dissertação apresentada ao Curso de  
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em Agronomia da Universidade Federal  
de Santa Maria (UFSM, RS), como  
requisito parcial para obtenção do título de  
**Mestre em Agronomia**

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Oderlei Bernardi

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Santa Maria, RS

2020

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A todos aqueles, que assim como eu, acreditam que a educação é um caminho árduo, mas vencedor para uma sociedade em contínuo desenvolvimento.

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*“Não disse que seria fácil, mas que valeria a pena”*  
*(São João Bosco)*

## **RESUMO**

### **PERFORMANCE DA SOJA QUE EXPRESSA AS PROTEÍNAS INSETICIDAS Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 e Cry1Ac PARA CONTROLE DE LEPIDÓPTEROS-PRAGA E MANEJO DA RESISTÊNCIA DE INSETOS**

AUTORA: Fabiana Britti Bacalhau

ORIENTADOR: Oderlei Bernardi

A soja geneticamente modificada que expressa genes da bactéria *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner (Bt) tem revolucionado o manejo de pragas na América do Sul, devido sua eficácia contra as principais lagartas desfolhadoras da soja. O evento de soja expressando Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 (evento MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788) foi aprovado pela CTNBio para uso comercial, sendo essa uma nova opção para o Manejo Integrado de Pragas e Manejo de Resistência de Insetos. Para entender o valor dessa nova tecnologia no manejo de lagartas defolhadoras da soja, foram realizados estudos em laboratório, casa de vegetação e campo para avaliar a performance da soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 no controle de *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Hübner), *Chrysodeixis includens* (Walker) e *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner). Em laboratório, estudos com as proteínas purificadas Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 (em dieta artificial) e disco de folha dos eventos (MON87751 × MON87701, MON87751, MON87701, A845232 e A844620) foram realizados para avaliar a suscetibilidade das espécies. Em casa de vegetação os estudos foram realizados sobre condições de alta infestação e a campo sobre infestação natural. Neonatas de *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera* foram suscetíveis as proteínas Cry1Ac: CL<sub>50</sub> (0,15 – 5,07), Cry1A.105: CL<sub>50</sub> (0,79 – 48,22) e Cry2Ab2: CL<sub>50</sub> (1,24 – 8,36). Nos bioensaios com discos de folha e em casa de vegetação a soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 e seus eventos individuais foram eficazes no controle *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera*. De modo similar, em condições de campo, a soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 foi eficaz contra *C. includens*. As proteínas Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac, Cry2Ab2 expressas isoladamente e no evento de soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 foram eficazes para controle de *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera*, atendendo um importante critério, o de pirâmide de genes, que é o conceito de mortalidade redundante, para o manejo da resistência de insetos.

**Palavras-chave:** Soja transgênica, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), Eficácia, Manejo da resistência de insetos.

## ABSTRACT

### PERFORMANCE OF SOYBEAN EXPRESSING INSECTICIDAL PROTEINS Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 AND Cry1Ac FOR CONTROL OF LEPIDOPTERAN PESTS AND INSECT RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT

AUTHOR: Fabiana Britti Bacalhau

ADVISOR: Oderlei Bernardi

Genetically modified soybeans expressing *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner (Bt) proteins have revolutionized pest management throughout South America due to efficacy against major soybean pests. The pyramided genetically modified soybean [*Glycine max* L. (Merr.)] MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788, expressing Cry1Ac, Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 from *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner was approved for commercial use in Brazil. In this study were conducted laboratory, greenhouse and field studies to assess the performance of this Bt soybean technology against key soybean lepidopteran pests and support insect resistance management plans. Laboratory studies were carried out with purified proteins Cry1Ac, Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 in artificial diet and soybean leaf discs to assess the susceptibility of the species, and greenhouse and field to assess the efficacy of the technology in high infestation and unde natural infestations in field conditions. Neonates of *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Hübner), *Chrysodeixis includens* (Walker) and *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner) were susceptible to Cry1Ac (LC<sub>50</sub> from 0.15 to 5.07), Cry1A.105 (LC<sub>50</sub> from 0.79 to 48.22) and Cry2Ab2 (LC<sub>50</sub> from 1.24 to 8.36) Bt proteins in diet-overlay bioassays. In laboratory leaf disc bioassays and greenhouse trials, MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 soybean as well as the individual components were effective in controlling *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*. Similarly, under field conditions, the pyramided event expressing Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac was highly effective at protecting soybean against *C. includens*. The individual proteins expressed by genetically modified soybean MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 killed all or nearly all the susceptible *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*, fulfilling an important pyramided Bt criterion which is the concept of redundant mortality, as a strategy for delaying resistance and sustaining the benefits of Bt soybean in Brazil.

**Keywords:** Transgenic soybean, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), Efficacy, Insect resistance management.

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## 1 INTRODUÇÃO

O Brasil é o maior produtor mundial de soja [*Glycine max* L. (Merr.)] com uma produção estimada de 123,2 milhões de toneladas na safra de 2019/20, o que representa 50% da produção total de grãos do Brasil (COMPANHIA NACIONAL DE ABASTECIMENTO, 2020; ESTATISTICAS DE COMÉRCIO EXTERIOR DO AGRONEGÓCIO BRASILEIRO, 2020). Uma projeção realizada pela consultoria Céleres para a safra 2019/2020 indica que a área total de transgênicos, soja, milho e algodão atingirá 53 milhões de hectares no Brasil, representando um aumento de 7,2% na adoção de eventos transgênicos em área cultivada com as três culturas (CONSULTORIA FOCADA NA ANÁLISE DO AGRONEGÓCIO, 2019). A adoção de plantas que expressam genes da bactéria entomopatogênica *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner (Bt) que codificam proteínas com ação inseticida tem trazido muitos benefícios para a agricultura, como o controle mais eficiente de insetos-praga, menor uso de inseticidas, redução dos efeitos negativos dos inseticidas em inimigos naturais e outros insetos que são benéficos para o Manejo Integrado de Pragas (MIP) (BROOKES & BARFOOT, 2013).

No Brasil, a partir do ano de 2005 a Comissão Técnica Nacional de Biossegurança (CTNBio) aprovou a liberação comercial de plantas Bt para controle de insetos. Entretanto, somente em 2010 foi liberado o primeiro evento de soja resistente a insetos e tolerante a herbicida, a soja MON87701 × MON89788 (COMISSÃO TÉCNICA NACIONAL DE BIOSSEGURANÇA, 2010). A soja Bt, MON87701 × MON89788, possui genes que codificam a expressão de uma única proteína Bt (Cry1Ac) e a proteína 5-enolpiruvilchiquimato-3-fosfato sintase (EPSPS) de *Agrobacterium* sp. que confere tolerância ao herbicida glifosato, essa tecnologia é conhecida comercialmente como Intacta RR2 PRO®. Após cinco anos de comercialização da soja Intacta RR2 PRO®, aproximadamente 18 milhões de hectares foram cultivados com essa tecnologia durante a safra 2017/2018 (BROOKES & BARFOOT, 2018). A grande adoção de Intacta RR2 PRO® se deve à eficácia de controle de *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Hübner), *Chrysodeixis includens* (Walker), e *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner). No entanto, a adoção dessa tecnologia em grande escala pode proporcionar uma maior pressão de seleção e favorecer a evolução da resistência, se estratégias de manejo da resistência não forem implementadas (BERNARDI, O. et al., 2012; BERNARDI, O. et al., 2014; DOURADO et al., 2016; MACRAE et al., 2005; YANO et al., 2015).

Em 2018, foi aprovado o evento de soja (MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788), que expressa três proteínas inseticidas de Bt, sendo MON87701 (Cry1Ac) e MON87751 (Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2) e duas proteínas que conferem tolerância a herbicidas,

MON89788 (tolerância ao glifosato) devido a expressão de 5-enolpiruvilchiquimato-3-fosfato sintase (EPSPS) de *Agrobacterium* sp. e MON87708 (tolerância ao dicamba (ácido 3,6-dicloro-2-metoxibenzóico)) pela expressão da proteína DMO (dicamba mono-oxigenase, desmetilase) derivado de *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* (COMISSÃO TÉCNICA NACIONAL DE BIOSSEGURANÇA, 2018).

Uma das principais ameaças à sustentabilidade das plantas Bt para o MIP é evolução da resistência de insetos (LABBE; LENORMAND; RAYMOND, 2005). As populações de insetos possuem variabilidade genética natural que afetam a resposta a uma determinada proteína Bt, com alelos conferindo suscetibilidade e outros conferindo resistência (TABASHNIK et al., 2009). Neste contexto, o Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) definiu a resistência como uma mudança hereditária na suscetibilidade de uma população da praga que se reflete na falha repetida de um produto em atingir o nível de controle esperado, quando utilizado de acordo com a recomendação para determinada espécie de inseto-praga. No início do processo de evolução da resistência estima-se que a frequência dos alelos que conferem resistência a determinado pesticida numa população é baixa ( $10^{-3}$  a  $10^{-12}$ ) (ROUSH & MCKENZIE, 1987).

No Brasil, houve evolução da resistência de *Spodoptera frugiperda* (Smith) ao milho TC1507 (expressando a proteína Cry1F) (FARIAS et al., 2014) e ao milho MON810 (expressando a proteína Cry1Ab) (OMOTO et al., 2016). Para esses casos de resistência existe a associação de três fatores, tais como: o uso de plantas Bt com um único modo de ação, expressão das proteínas Bt em baixa dose e a baixa adoção de áreas de refúgio (DHURUA & GUJAR, 2011; FARIAS et al., 2014; HUANG; ANDOW; BUSCHMAN, 2011; OMOTO et al., 2016; STORER et al., 2010; TABASHNIK; BREVAULT; CARRIÈRE, 2013).

Diante desse cenário, um dos grandes desafios da agricultura brasileira é implementar estratégias de manejo da resistência para retardar a evolução de resistência de modo preventivo, antes que isso se torne um problema econômico (GOULD & TABASHNIK, 1998). Para o Manejo da Resistência de Insetos (MRI) a plantas Bt têm sido usadas as estratégias de alta dose e “pirâmide de genes” associadas a áreas de refúgio (BATES et al., 2005; CARRIÈRE; FABRICK; TABASHNIK, 2016; GOULD, 1998; HUANG; ANDOW; BUSCHMAN, 2011; TABASHNIK et al., 2009). A estratégia de alta dose se baseia na expressão da proteína inseticida numa quantidade suficiente para matar todos os insetos suscetíveis e quase todos os heterozigotos (progênie do cruzamento entre resistentes e suscetíveis) (HUANG; ANDOW; BUSCHMAN, 2011). Por sua vez, a estratégia de “pirâmide de genes” (presente na soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788) se caracteriza pela inserção de múltiplos genes que codificam proteínas Bt em uma única planta, tornando baixa a frequência

inicial dos indivíduos resistentes às múltiplas proteínas Bt (FERRÉ & VAN RIE, 2002). Essa estratégia é baseada no conceito de que a resistência para duas proteínas é independente, ou seja, conferida por diferentes genes. Assim, o tempo que levaria para uma praga evoluir à resistência a uma proteína Bt é equivalente ao produto do número de gerações que a praga levaria para evoluir para resistência a cada proteína separadamente (ANDOW, 2008).

Nesse sentido, para entender o valor da soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 no controle dos principais lepidópteros-praga da soja no Brasil e subsidiar as estratégias de MIP e MRI, este estudo teve como objetivos:

- 1) Avaliar a suscetibilidade dos principais lepidópteros-praga da soja (*A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera*) às proteínas inseticidas Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 em laboratório.
- 2) Avaliar a eficácia da soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 que expressa Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 no controle de *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera* em laboratório, casa de vegetação e campo.
- 3) Avaliar se a soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 que expressa Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 atende o conceito de mortalidade redundante para o manejo da resistência de insetos.

## 2 REVISÃO DE LITERATURA

### 2.1 ASPECTOS BIECOLÓGICOS DE LEPIDÓPTEROS-PRAGA DA SOJA

#### 2.1.1 *Anticarsia gemmatalis*

A lagarta-da-soja, *A. gemmatalis*, é um importante desfolhador da cultura da soja no Brasil (HOFFMANN-CAMPO; OLIVEIRA; MOSCARDI, 1985). Sua ocorrência já foi reportada desde a Argentina até o sudeste dos Estados Unidos (GAZZONI et al., 1994; PANIZZI & CORREA-FERREIRA, 1997). A lagarta-da-soja apresenta preferência alimentar pela soja, mas é um inseto polífago. Estudos indicaram mais de 30 espécies vegetais como hospedeiros para o desenvolvimento *A. gemmatalis* (HERZOG; TODD, 1980). Outro aspecto de *A. gemmatalis* é seu alto potencial reprodutivo, com cada fêmea tendo a capacidade de ovipositar até 1000 ovos, sendo esses depositados isoladamente na parte inferior das folhas, no caule, nos ramos e pecíolos, mas com maior concentração nos terços médio e inferior das plantas de soja (FERREIRA & PANIZZI, 1978). O período larval de *A. gemmatalis* compreende

5-6 ínstares, com duração de ~14 dias e cada larva pode consumir de 85 a 150 cm<sup>2</sup> de área foliar durante o estágio larval (BUENO et al., 2011; CARDOSO et al., 1996; SALVADORI & CORSEUIL, 1982).

Essa espécie pode ter mais de três gerações ao ano na cultura da soja, no entanto, o número de gerações pode ser ainda maior devido a alguns fatores: genótipos de soja mais precoces e/ou tardios, época de semeadura proporcionando uma sobreposição dos ciclos das cultivares, presença de plantas hospedeiras alternativas (BRAGA et al., 2011). Portanto, o maior número de gerações pode intensificar a sua exposição à soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788, aumentando o risco de evolução da resistência.

### **2.1.2 *Chrysodeixis includens***

A falsa-medideira da soja, *C. includens*, é o mais importante Plusiinae qua ataca a cultura da soja. Sua ocorrência é desde o norte dos EUA até o sul da América do Sul (ALFORD & HAMMOND JUNIOR, 1982). No Brasil, até a década de 90 essa espécie era considerado de importância secundária devido a ocorrência em baixa densidade. A partir da safra 2001/2002 se tornou um grande problema fitossanitário na cultura da soja, devido aos vários surtos, sendo considerada de difícil controle pelos agricultores. Esse cenário pode estar relacionado ao aumento no uso de fungicidas para o controle da ferrugem asiática da soja, *Phakopsora pachyrhizi* Sydow, que contribuiu para a redução de populações de fungos entomopatogênicos que eram responsáveis pelo controle biológico natural da espécie (SOSA-GÓMEZ et al., 2003).

Considerada uma espécie polífaga, a lagarta falsa-medideira da soja tem capacidade de se desenvolver em mais de 70 plantas hospedeiras, de 29 famílias, sendo descrita em feijão, fumo, girassol, alface, tomate, couve-flor, algodão, soja, entre outras (HERZOG & TODD, 1980). No entanto, *C. includens* possui preferência alimentar pela cultura da soja em relação a outras culturas (KHALSA; KOGAN; LUCKMANN, 1979). Além disso, possui alta capacidade reprodutiva, uma vez que cada fêmea pode ovopositar em média 700 ovos na face inferior das folhas e nos terços superiores do dossel das plantas (JOST & PITRE, 2002).

### **2.1.3 *Helicoverpa armigera***

*Helicoverpa armigera* é uma das espécies-praga de maior importância da agricultura mundial (FITT, 1989). Está amplamente disseminada na Europa, África, Ásia e Austrália (CUNNINGHAM & ZALUCKI, 2014). No Brasil, *H. armigera* foi documentada oficialmente

em 2013 e se estabeleceu em todas as regiões (CZEPAK et al., 2013; LEITE; ZUCCHI; OMOTO, 2014; MASTRANGELO et al., 2014; SOSA-GÓMEZ et al., 2015). Há indícios de que houveram múltiplas introduções anteriores ao ano de 2013, devido a alta diversidade genética em populações dessa espécie em diferentes regiões (LEITE; ZUCCHI; OMOTO, 2014; SOSA-GÓMEZ et al., 2016).

Surtos populacionais de *Heliothinae* em soja, inicialmente identificados como *Helicoverpa zea* (Boddie) e *Chloridea virescens* (F.), coincidiram na mesma época em diversas regiões do Brasil nas safras 2011/2012 e 2012/2013, e essa espécie poderia estar presente no País há muito tempo, suficiente para se estabelecer em altas densidades populacionais e ocasionar sérios prejuízos econômicos em diferentes cultivos (DEGRANDE; OMOTO, 2013; TAY et al., 2015).

A polifagia, mobilidade, fecundidade e densidade populacional dessa espécie em sistemas agrícolas estão fortemente associados às condições climáticas e à disponibilidade de hospedeiros cultivados (soja, algodão, milho, sorgo e milheto), que favorecem o aumento populacional e, consequentemente, a evolução da resistência à inseticidas e plantas Bt (FITT, 1989; MAELZER & ZALUCKI, 1999).

## 2.2 TECNOLOGIAS DE SOJA Bt RESISTENTE A INSETOS NO BRASIL

O primeiro evento de soja Bt resistente a insetos (evento MON87701 × MON89788) foi liberado para uso comercial no ano de 2010 (COMISSÃO TÉCNICA NACIONAL DE BIOSSEGURANÇA, 2010). Esse evento possui genes que codificam a expressão da proteína inseticida Cry1Ac que confere resistência a insetos (BERNARDI, O. et al., 2012). A soja MON87701 × MON89788 tem como pragas-alvo de controle *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens*, *C. virescens*, *Crocidosema aporema* (Walsingham), *Elasmopalpus lignosellus* (Zeller) e espécies do gênero *Helicoverpa* (BERNARDI, O. et al., 2012, 2014; MACRAE et al., 2005; YU et al., 2013). Em 2016 foi aprovada para comercialização a soja Bt (evento DAS-81419-2) que expressa as proteínas Cry1Ac e Cry1F (COMISSÃO TÉCNICA NACIONAL DE BIOSSEGURANÇA, 2016). Em 2018, houve a liberação comercial do evento de soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 que expressa três proteínas inseticidas Cry1A.105, Cry1Ac e Cry2Ab2 para o manejo de lepidópteros-praga da soja e tolerância aos herbicidas – dicamba (devido a expressão da proteína DMO (dicamba mono-oxigenase, desmetilase) derivado de *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*) e glifosato (pela expressão da

proteína 5-enolpiruvilchiquimato-3-fosfato sintase (EPSPS) de *Agrobacterium* sp.) (COMISSÃO TÉCNICA NACIONAL DE BIOSSEGURANÇA, 2018).

Uma projeção da consultoria Céleres, a área total de transgênicos, soja, milho e algodão, atingirá 53 milhões de hectares no Brasil na safra 2019/2020, representando um crescimento de 1,3 milhão de hectares em relação à safra anterior (CONSULTORIA FOCADA NA ANÁLISE DO AGRONEGÓCIO, 2019). Na safra 17/18 a área plantada de soja MON87701 × MON89788 no Brasil foi mais de 18 milhões de hectares, representando 52% da área de soja do País. A ampla adoção dessa tecnologia se deve aos benefícios de aumento de produtividade, manejo de insetos-praga e controle de plantas daninhas (BROOKES & BARFOOT, 2018).

### **2.3 PROTEÍNAS Bt E MODO DE AÇÃO**

A bactéria entomopatogênica *B. thuringiensis* é conhecida pela sua utilização para o controle de insetos pragas na agricultura. A toxicidade de Bt a insetos se deve aos cristais que são compostos por uma ou várias proteínas Cry, também chamadas de δ-endotoxinas ou proteínas inseticidas vegetativas (Vip). As δ-endotoxinas constituintes dos cristais são protoxinas solubilizadas e proteoliticamente convertidas em polipeptídeos menores no trato digestivo das larvas suscetíveis. Estes polipeptídeos associam-se a receptores específicos de ligação nas microvilosidades apicais das células do intestino dos insetos, causando lise osmótica por meio da formação de poros na membrana (FIUZA et al., 1996; SCHNEPF et al., 1998). O espectro de atividade inseticida destas toxinas é restrito devido ao seu modo de ação. Os sítios de ligação não somente estão envolvidos na especificidade das toxinas de Bt como também representam um mecanismo de resistência dos insetos às δ-endotoxinas (FIUZA et al., 1996; de MAAGD et al., 1999). A solubilização das proteínas depende do pH alcalino do intestino de lepidópteros e dípteros, e uma menor efetividade destas proteínas em coleópteros pode estar associadas ao pH neutro ou pouco ácido, necessitando, então, de uma ativação in vitro (SCHNEPF et al., 1998; de MAAGD et al., 2001). As proteínas Vip também são produzidas por *B. thuringiensis*, o gene *vip*, codificador da proteína Vip inicia a expressão das proteínas inseticidas durante a fase de crescimento vegetativo e continua sendo expresso em culturas esporulantes (ESTRUCH et al., 1996). As proteínas Vip possuem toxicidade da mesma magnitude que a das proteínas Cry contra insetos suscetíveis, porém apresentam propriedades distintas da ligação das Cry (ARORA et al., 2003).

As culturas Bt de soja, milho e algodão disponíveis atualmente expressam proteínas inseticidas do grupo Cry1, Cry2, Cry3 e Vip3A. Segundo Carrière et al., (2015), as proteínas

do grupo Cry1 presentes nas plantas possuem elevada similaridade na sequência de aminoácidos, principalmente no domínio II da estrutura tridimensional da proteína inseticida, porque qualquer mutação no sítio de ação onde essas proteínas se ligam para exercer seu efeito tóxico, favorece a evolução de resistência cruzada (CARRIÈRE; CRICKMORE; TABASHNIK, 2015; HERNÁNDEZ-RODRÍGUEZ et al., 2013; HUANG et al., 2014). Ao contrário, a proteína Cry2Ab2 apresenta baixa similaridade de aminoácidos com proteínas Cry1, porque não compartilham o mesmo sítio de ligação, o que demonstra um baixo potencial de resistência cruzada com as proteínas Cry1 (CARRIÈRE; CRICKMORE; TABASHNIK, 2015; HERNÁNDEZ-RODRÍGUEZ et al., 2013). Em relação as proteínas Vip, vários trabalhos confirmam a ausência de resistência cruzada entre proteínas Vip3 e Cry1 (FANG et al., 2007; GOMIS-CEBOLLA et al., 2018; PICKETT et al., 2017; YANG et al., 2018). No entanto, ainda são necessários estudos para entender a resistência cruzada entre proteínas Bt que supostamente não compartilham os mesmos sítios de ligação em lepidópteros (TABASHNIK & CARRIÈRE, 2020).

#### **2.4 ESTRATÉGIA DE MANEJO DA RESISTÊNCIA DE INSETOS A PLANTAS Bt**

Os insetos apresentam uma grande capacidade de se adaptarem a diferentes agentes de controle, dentre os quais as plantas Bt. Sendo assim, é importante definir como uma determinada planta Bt deve ser utilizada para que não ocorra seleção de indivíduos resistentes. Dentro das alternativas de MRI a plantas Bt, tem-se utilizado as estratégias de alta dose, refúgio e pirâmide de genes (GOULD & TABASHNIK, 1998).

A principal estratégia de MRI a plantas Bt é denominada de alta dose e refúgio (TABASHNIK et al., 2009). Essa estratégia se baseia nas premissas que os alelos de resistência a uma proteína Bt são raros e que uma proteína Bt é expressa na planta numa quantidade suficiente para matar todos os insetos homozigotos suscetíveis (SS) e praticamente todos os heterozigotos (RS), tornando os alelos de resistência "funcionalmente recessivos". Nesse cenário, apenas os homozigotos resistentes (RR) irão sobreviver na área de cultivo Bt, os quais devem acasalar-se com os insetos homozigotos suscetíveis (SS) oriundos das áreas de refúgio (cultivadas com plantas não-Bt) para gerar uma progênie heterozigota a qual, quando se alimentar à planta Bt morrerá (GOULD, 1998; HUANG; ANDOW; BUSCHMAN, 2011).

Outra estratégia de MRI é a pirâmide de genes, cujo princípio básico é que cada proteína inseticida Bt expressa na planta piramidada deve matar todos ou a maioria dos insetos suscetíveis, ou seja, esses insetos serão mortos “duas vezes”, sendo isso chamado de controle

“redundante” (CARRIÈRE; FABRICK; TABASHNIK, 2016). Desta forma, os insetos resistentes a uma das proteínas da pirâmide serão mortos pela(s) outra(s) proteína(s), e vice-versa (BATES et al., 2005). Além disso, para a maior efetividade dessa estratégia no MRI, deve-se dar preferência a proteínas Bt com diferentes modo de ação, preferencialmente de grupos diferentes, como Cry1, Cry2, Vip3A, pois cada proteína poderá se ligar a diferentes receptores (HERNÁNDEZ-RODRIGUEZ et al., 2013).

### **3 ARTIGO**

## **Performance and insect resistance management attributes of genetically modified soybean expressing Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac proteins to key lepidopteran pests in Brazil**

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**Running title:** Pyramided Bt soybean efficacy against lepidopteran pests in Brazil

Section: Pest Management Science

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## Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** The pyramided genetically modified soybean [(*Glycine max* L. Merr.)] MON 87751 × MON 87708 × MON 87701 × MON 89788, expressing Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac from *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner, was approved for commercial use in Brazil. It was conducted laboratory, greenhouse and field studies to assess the efficacy of this Bt soybean technology against key soybean lepidopteran pests and inform insect resistance management (IRM) plans.

**RESULTS:** Neonates of *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Hübner), *Chrysodeixis includens* (Walker) and *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner) were highly susceptible to Cry1A.105 (LC<sub>50</sub> from 0.79 to 48.22), Cry2Ab2 (LC<sub>50</sub> from 1.24 to 8.36) and Cry1Ac (LC<sub>50</sub> from 0.15 to 5.07) in diet-overlay bioassays. In laboratory leaf disc bioassays and greenhouse trials, MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 soybean as well as the individual components were highly effective in controlling *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens*, and *H. armigera*. Similarly, under field conditions, the pyramided event expressing Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac was highly effective at protecting soybean against *C. includens*.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The individual Bt proteins expressed by genetically modified soybean MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 killed all or nearly all the susceptible *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*, fulfilling one important criterion for successfully delaying resistance to pyramided Bt crops.

**Keywords:** pyramided Bt soybean; velvetbean caterpillar; soybean looper; Old World bollworm; insect resistance management

## 1 Introduction

Soybean [(*Glycine max* L. Merr.)] pest management in South America has been transformed since the 2013/2014 crop season due to the deployment of genetically modified (GM) soybean technology providing resistance to key lepidopteran pests. The stacked soybean technology MON87701 × MON89788 (Intacta RR2 PRO<sup>®</sup>), expressing the Cry1Ac insecticidal Bt protein (event MON87701) and conferring tolerance to glyphosate (event MON89788), became available to farmers and provided a robust foundation for integrated pest management programs (IPM) to protect the crop against damage caused by *Anticarsia gemmatalis* (Hübner), *Chrysodeixis includens* (Walker) and *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner). Approximately five years after its initial commercialization, nearly 24 million hectares were planted with this technology during the 2017/2018 crop season, representing 41% of the total soybean plantings in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>1</sup>

The high adoption of this technology can in part be attributed to its efficacy against major lepidopteran soybean pests such as *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*, which fits within an insect resistance management (IRM) strategy called “high-dose/refuge”.<sup>2–6</sup> However, the high adoption of Intacta RR2 PRO<sup>®</sup> on an even larger soybean-growing area in South America is imposing increasing selection pressure on target species populations. Delaying the evolution of insect resistance is the main challenge to maintaining the benefits of this technology in South America. High adoption in Brazil of Bt maize technologies to manage *Spodoptera frugiperda* (Smith) that did not meet the high-dose criterion, in combination with poor refuge compliance, resulted in field-evolved resistance to the Cry1F protein expressed in TC1507 maize,<sup>7</sup> which also impacted the efficacy and durability of other Cry1-based maize technologies because of cross-resistance among these Bt proteins.<sup>8,9</sup> Therefore, developing and deploying Bt crops expressing multiple effective insecticidal

proteins, with low probability of cross-resistance, is needed to delay the evolution of insect resistance.<sup>10–12</sup>

This strategy involves insertion of multiple genes encoding Bt proteins into a single plant (pyramiding) and primarily assumes that resistance to each Bt protein is independent, in other words, that there is no one mechanism in the insect pests that can confer resistance to all the insecticidal proteins in the pyramid.<sup>13–15</sup> In 2018, the Brazilian National Biosafety Technical Commission (CTNBio) approved the cultivation of the GM soybean MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 in Brazil.<sup>16</sup> This combination of soybean events was produced by conventional breeding of four component events: MON87751, MON87708, MON87701 and MON89788. The transgenes inserted in MON87751 (Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2) and MON87701 (Cry1Ac) are *cry* genes from *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Berliner) that express the respective insecticidal proteins. The transgene inserted in MON89788 soybean produces CP4 EPSPS (5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase from *Agrobacterium* sp.), which confers tolerance to glyphosate, and MON87708 soybean produces DMO (dicamba monooxygenase, demethylase) derived from *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*, which confers tolerance to dicamba (3,6-dichloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid).

In this study, we conducted laboratory, greenhouse and field studies to assess the efficacy of the stacked soybean MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 (and its component proteins) in Brazil against the key soybean lepidopteran pests *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*, and support IRM plans.

## 2 Material and methods

### 2.1 Susceptibility to Bt proteins in diet-overlay bioassays

The Cry1Ac, Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2 purified insecticidal proteins were produced by Bayer US Crop Science (Chesterfield, MO, US) at 91%, 80% and 87% purity, respectively. The

activity of these Bt proteins was evaluated against susceptible reference strains of *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*. The *A. gemmatalis* and *C. includens* susceptible strains have been maintained in the laboratory for >10 years and *H. armigera* for approximately 2 years free of selection pressure by Bt proteins and insecticides. Bioassays were performed with an artificial diet (adapted from Greene et al.<sup>17</sup>), commonly used for rearing Lepidoptera larvae. After preparation, the diet was poured into 128-well bioassay trays (BIO-BA-128; CD International Inc., Pitman, NJ) (1 ml/well) and allowed to gel for 30 min inside a laminar air flow cabinet under ultraviolet light. Afterwards, 5–7 concentrations of Cry1Ac (0.020–83.30 ng/cm<sup>2</sup>), Cry1A.105 (0.080–666.00 ng/cm<sup>2</sup>) and Cry2Ab2 (0.080–83.30 ng/cm<sup>2</sup>) were prepared by dilution in TX buffer (0.005%): Triton X-100, 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4 and 0.01 mM tetraacetic diamine ethylene acid (EDTA), pH 8.0. The control treatment was composed only of TX buffer. After the diet had solidified, Bt protein and control treatments were applied on the diet surface with a repeater pipette (100 µl/well). The diet surface area in each well was 1.5 cm<sup>2</sup>. After a drying period (~60 min), one neonate (<24 h old) was added to each well using a fine paintbrush. The trays were sealed with self-adhesive plastic sheets (BIO-CV-16; CD International Inc.) that allowed for gas exchange and then placed in a climatic chamber (temperature 27 ± 1°C, 60 ± 10% relative humidity, and 14 h:10 h light:dark photoperiod). A total of 3–4 replicates of 16 neonates/species/concentration of each Bt protein were tested. Mortality was assessed at 6 days. Larvae without movement were considered dead. To assess the relative toxicity of Bt proteins against larvae of lepidopteran species tested, the LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> lethal concentrations and their 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were estimated using probit analysis<sup>18</sup> in JMP SAS®.<sup>19</sup> A likelihood ratio test was used to test the hypothesis that the LC<sub>p</sub> values (lethal concentration at which a percent mortality *P* was attained) were equal. If the hypothesis was rejected, pairwise comparisons were performed, and significant differences were declared if the CIs did not overlap.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2 Efficacy in leaf disc bioassays

Leaf discs of MON87751 × MON87701 (expressing Cry2Ab2, Cry1A.105 and Cry1Ac), MON87751 (expressing Cry2Ab2 and Cry1A.105), MON87701 (expressing Cry1Ac), A845232 (expressing Cry1A.105), A844620 (expressing Cry2Ab2) and a near-isogenic negative check were grown in a greenhouse. When plants reached the V4, R1–R2 and R5 phenological stages, the last completely expanded leaves were removed from the upper third of the plant. Leaf discs 1.2 cm in diameter were cut using a metallic cutter and placed on a gel mixture of agar–water at 2.5% agar (1 ml/well) in 24-well acrylic plates (Corning®, Tewksbury, MA, USA). Leaf discs were separated from the water–agar layer by filter paper. One neonate (<24 h old) of a given species was placed on each leaf disc using a fine brush. Plates were sealed with plastic film (Magipack®) and placed in a climatic chamber (temperature  $25 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ ; relative humidity  $60 \pm 10\%$ , and 14 h:10 h light: dark photoperiod). The experimental design was completely randomized with five replicates per treatment. Each replicate consisted of 24 neonates, for a total of 120 neonates tested for each species (*A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*). Mortality was recorded at 5 days, submitted to variance analysis, and the treatment averages were compared by *t*-test ( $P < 0.05$ ) (PROC TTEST) in SAS® 9.1.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.3 Efficacy trials in greenhouse

The Bt soybean events and near-isogenic negative check used in the leaf disc bioassays were also tested with high infestations of *C. includens* and *H. armigera* under greenhouse conditions. For each insect species, the experiments comprised six treatments consisting of MON87751 × MON87701 (expressing Cry2Ab2, Cry1A.105 and Cry1Ac), MON87751 (expressing Cry2Ab2 and Cry1A.105), MON87701 (expressing Cry1Ac), A845232 (expressing Cry1A.105), A844620 (expressing Cry2Ab2) and a near-isogenic negative check.

Experiments were seeded at a density of 13 seeds per meter, in a randomized block design. Four blocks were planted for each experiment, each with two soybean rows of each treatment per block. Within each block, the soybean lines (2.0 m row length × 0.4 m between rows) represented the experimental replicates (plots). From the V6 phenological stage until the end of the study, the plants were kept in screened nylon cages 13.0 m long × 3.5 m wide × 2.9 m tall. When the plants reached the R1–R2 phenological stage, 3,000 *C. includens* or *H. armigera* pupae were subdivided into four groups of 750 pupae, packed in open acrylic boxes (11 cm × 11 cm) and then placed in the respective cage at four points (one point of infestation per block) on 1-m-tall wooden stands. The larval and pupal incidence and defoliation assessments were made at 30 days after adult emergence. Larval and pupal incidence were estimated by counting the number of larvae or pupae in a 1-m row of soybeans and expressed as the number per meter. The percentage of pods damaged by *H. armigera* was evaluated for the 13 central plants of each row by counting the total pods and damaged pods on each plant. To assess defoliation, 26 plants per plot were evaluated at random, with the percentage of defoliation estimated by comparing the leaves with a soybean defoliation scale.<sup>22</sup> The data for larval incidence, percentage of defoliation and the treatment averages were compared by *t*-tests ( $P < 0.05$ ) (PROC TTEST) in SAS<sup>®</sup> 9.1.<sup>21</sup>

#### **2.4 Efficacy in field trials**

Under field conditions, the efficacy of the GM soybean MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 was evaluated under natural lepidopteran infestations. The trial was conducted at a Bayer experimental station located at Não-Me-Toque, RS, Brazil. Three treatments were planted: MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 (expressing Cry2Ab2, Cry1A.105 and Cry1Ac), Intacta RR2 PRO<sup>®</sup> soybean (expressing Cry1Ac) and an isogenic negative check. The experimental design had randomized blocks with four replicates

per treatment. The useful area of each treatment was 32 m<sup>2</sup> (8.0 m length × 4.0 m width) with eight soybean rows (8.0 m length × 0.5 m between rows). Larval incidence and defoliation (%) were monitored every 7 days. These evaluations started when the target pests were first seen in the experimental area and continued until the soybeans senesced. The incidence of larvae of Lepidoptera soybean pests was determined by beating the plants of the four center rows of each plot on a beating cloth (1.0 m length × 0.50 m width). The larval incidence of each target species was converted into larvae/meter. For the evaluation of defoliation, 10 plants per row were randomly evaluated in the four center rows. The percentage of defoliation per plant was estimated by comparing the leaves to a defoliation scale for soybean.<sup>22</sup> The data for larval incidence, percentage of defoliation and the treatment averages were compared by *t*-test (*P* < 0.05) (PROC TTEST) in SAS® 9.1.<sup>21</sup>

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Susceptibility to Bt proteins in diet-overlay bioassays

The Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac proteins showed high activity against neonates of *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera*. The estimated LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> values of Cry1Ac (0.15 and 3.05 ng/cm<sup>2</sup>, respectively) and Cry1A.105 (0.79 and 2.23 ng/cm<sup>2</sup>, respectively) for *A. gemmatalis* indicated that these Bt proteins were more active against *A. gemmatalis* than against the other species evaluated, while these proteins had similar biological activity (based on LC<sub>50</sub> values) to *C. includens* and *H. armigera* (Table 1). When exposed to Cry2Ab2, neonates of *C. includens* and *A. gemmatalis* had similar susceptibility (based on overlapping CIs for the LC<sub>50</sub> values) and were less susceptible to Cry2Ab2 than *H. armigera*.

### **3.2 Efficacy in leaf disc bioassays**

Neonates of *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera* were highly susceptible to the Bt proteins Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac when expressed individually or combined in GM soybean events (Table 2). At 5 days, except for *H. armigera* on GM A844620 expressing only Cry2Ab2 (97.9% mortality at R1–R2), there was complete mortality of all species on all the Bt-expressing materials, while mortality ranged from 3.1% to 18.8% on the negative check.

### **3.3 Efficacy trials in greenhouse**

Bt soybean events were exposed to high infestations of *C. includens* and *H. armigera* in the greenhouse. Larval and pupal incidence of *C. includens* were insignificant on both single-trait and pyramided soybean events, resulting in insignificant defoliation (Table 3). In contrast, high larval and pupae incidence were verified on the isogenic negative check (17.7 and 27.8 larvae and pupae per meter, respectively), causing 50% defoliation, which was the maximum value on the scale used to assess this endpoint. Similar results were obtained for *H. armigera*, with 0.5 or fewer larvae per meter on Bt soybean events, while the isogenic negative check had more than 33 larvae per meter (Table 4). The low larval incidence on the Bt soybean events caused minimal defoliation (near zero) and pod damage (2.1% or lower). Due to the proximity of soybean rows in the experimental plots, larval movement from non-Bt soybean onto Bt soybean plants may have affected these results. In contrast, the high larval incidence on non-Bt soybean resulted in 50% defoliation and almost 100% of pods damaged by *H. armigera*.

### **3.4 Efficacy in field trials**

The performance of MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 soybean was also evaluated under natural infestation by the target pest species. *Chrysodeixis includens* was the only key Lepidoptera soybean pest species found in considerable numbers in the non-Bt control

plots (Table 5). Significant differences in larval incidence of *C. includens* were detected from the R1 to R6 growth stages between MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 and MON87701 × MON89788 (Intacta RR2 PRO® soybeans) compared to the isogenic negative check (0.00 and up to 0.12, respectively, compared to 3.93 larvae per meter). Defoliation also was significantly different from the R1 to R6 growth stages for MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 and MON87701 × MON89788 compared to the isogenic negative check, reaching 1.3%, 5.3% and 28.5% of defoliation, respectively.

#### **4 Discussion**

A pyramiding strategy to manage insect resistance to Bt crops, which combines two or more insecticidal proteins active against the same insect, represents a robust strategy to manage lepidopteran pests by conferring higher protection and delaying resistance relative to single-mechanism-of-action technologies.<sup>13,23,24</sup> Pyramided Bt crops rely on the assumption that each insecticidal protein acts individually in a way that would kill all insects susceptible to that insecticidal protein, including those insects that are resistant to the other protein(s) expressed in the plant.<sup>13,25</sup> This concept was named “redundant killing”.<sup>13,26,27</sup> Therefore, a central question about the ability of pyramids to delay the onset of insect resistance is the extent to which individuals resistant to one Bt protein are killed by the other(s) in the Bt plant.<sup>25</sup>

Another important requirement is to achieve high levels of mortality of susceptible insects by the individual proteins in the pyramid when expressed in plants.<sup>12,13,23,24</sup> Thus, to evaluate the killing power of pyramiding Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 and Cry1Ac in a single Bt soybean plant, we measured efficacy in multiple ways for each of the key target insect pests using purified protein and plant tissue. The LC<sub>50</sub> values revealed higher susceptibility of *A. gemmatalis* than of *C. includens* and *H. armigera* to Cry1Ac. The same trend was observed for Cry1A.105; based on LC<sub>50</sub> values, *A. gemmatalis* was ~60 times more susceptible to

Cry1A.105 than *C. includens* and ~35 times more susceptible to Cry1A.105 than *H. armigera*. High susceptibility to Cry1 proteins has been previously reported for *A. gemmatalis*, which has been shown in previous studies to be more susceptible than *C. includens*<sup>3,4,28</sup> and *H. armigera*.<sup>6</sup> Neonates of *H. armigera* were less susceptible to Cry2Ab2, with higher LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> values, than were *A. gemmatalis* and *C. includens*. Overall, our results indicate that the primary soybean pests in Brazil – *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera* – all exhibited high susceptibility to Cry1Ac, Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2.

Mathematical modeling indicated that the concentration of each insecticidal protein in a Bt pyramid must be sufficiently high to kill at least 95% of susceptible individuals to maximize the delaying of resistance.<sup>13</sup> The high mortality levels obtained for *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera* feeding on soybeans plants expressing only Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 or Cry1Ac indicate that combining these proteins in a single Bt soybean plant will kill all or nearly all susceptible insects. Due to the current absence of resistant colonies for testing, our assessment strategy used susceptible insects. Resistance, and cross-resistance between Bt proteins, could reduce the redundant killing power of a pyramid because individuals resistant to one insecticidal protein could also survive exposure to other(s) in the pyramid.<sup>24</sup> The potential for cross-resistance among Cry1 proteins has been documented in several lepidopteran species.<sup>8,29–32</sup> Therefore, it will be important to establish resistant strains of the key lepidopteran soybean pests to understand the potential for cross-resistance among the individual components of MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 soybean.

Despite its potential IPM and IRM benefits, the effectiveness and durability of MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 soybean may be compromised if resistance to one of the Bt proteins is established at the field level.<sup>23,33</sup> In fact, relevant field exposure to Cry1Ac, an important component of MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788, is ongoing because of the widespread plantings of MON87701 × MON89788 (Intacta RR2

PRO®, a single-mode-of-action Bt plant expressing only Cry1Ac) in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>1</sup> Despite its high level of adoption in recent years, MON87701 × MON89788 continues to provide effective control of the major lepidopteran soybean pests, particularly *A. gemmatalis* and *C. includens*. The Cry1Ac resistance allele frequency baseline established during the pre-commercial period of Intacta RR2 PRO®, crop season 2014/2015, indicated low initial resistance allele (R) frequencies in *C. includens* populations for Cry1Ac in Brazil (MON87701 × MON89788) (estimated R frequency = 0.0004).<sup>5</sup> Using the same methodology as Yano et al.<sup>5</sup> the Cry1Ac resistance allele frequency in *C. includens* field populations has been systematically monitored across crop seasons and regions in Brazil. The increasing adoption of MON87701 × MON89788 soybean in Brazilian fields has not resulted in a shift in resistance allele frequency, which was estimated during crop season 2019/20 at similarly low levels to those established during the pre-commercial phase (unpublished data).

The maintenance of low Cry1Ac resistance allele frequencies in *C. includens* in Brazil after five years of commercial use of MON87701 × MON89788 soybean can be attributed to the fit of the technology to the high-dose concept<sup>2–5</sup> and the maintenance of reasonable levels of refuge compliance at the field level. Brazilian growers planting MON 87701 × MON89788 soybean are recommended to plant at least 20% of their soybean area with non-Bt soybean varieties (structured refuge) within 800 meters of their Bt soybean.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the development of new, effective pyramided Bt soybean technologies, such as MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788, will play an important role in delaying resistance and sustaining the benefits of Bt soybean in Brazil.

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**Table 1.** Concentration–mortality response (LC; ng/cm<sup>2</sup>) of *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera* neonates exposed to Bt proteins overlaid on artificial diet.

| Bt protein                    | n   | Slope ± SE  | LC <sub>50</sub> (95% CI) <sup>a</sup> | LC <sub>90</sub> (95% CI) <sup>a</sup> | χ <sup>2b</sup> | df <sup>c</sup> |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Cry1A.105</b>              |     |             |  |  |                 |                 |
| <i>Anticarsia gemmatalis</i>  | 192 | 2.85 ± 0.42 | 0.79 (0.60–1.02)                       | 2.23 (1.64–3.58)                       | 5.07            | 4               |
| <i>Chrysodeixis includens</i> | 336 | 0.88 ± 0.11 | 28.68 (15.63–54.61)                    | 590.26 (338.21–817.64)                 | 4.45            | 3               |
| <i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>   | 208 | 4.05 ± 1.60 | 48.22 (19.23–68.14)                    | 99.90 (71.06–140.73)                   | 5.62            | 4               |
| <b>Cry2Ab2</b>                |     |             |  |  |                 |                 |
| <i>Anticarsia gemmatalis</i>  | 186 | 1.51 ± 0.47 | 1.79 (0.80–4.89)                       | 12.57 (3.73–18.89)                     | 9.43            | 4               |
| <i>Chrysodeixis includens</i> | 176 | 2.14 ± 0.68 | 1.24 (0.19–2.16)                       | 4.95 (3.10–12.27)                      | 2.17            | 3               |
| <i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>   | 208 | 1.84 ± 0.33 | 8.36 (4.90–13.38)                      | 41.67 (24.32–94.23)                    | 0.14            | 3               |
| <b>Cry1Ac</b>                 |     |             |  |  |                 |                 |
| <i>Anticarsia gemmatalis</i>  | 175 | 0.99 ± 0.20 | 0.15 (0.06–0.28)                       | 3.05 (1.29–18.38)                      | 2.86            | 4               |
| <i>Chrysodeixis includens</i> | 240 | 1.94 ± 0.39 | 4.98 (2.63–7.78)                       | 22.86 (14.04–53.91)                    | 1.26            | 4               |
| <i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>   | 271 | 0.96 ± 0.14 | 5.07 (2.87–8.33)                       | 91.02 (52.97–174.16)                   | 4.74            | 3               |

<sup>a</sup>LC<sub>50</sub>: concentration of Bt protein (ng/cm<sup>2</sup>) required to kill 50% of larvae in the observation period of 6 days.

Similarly, LC<sub>90</sub> is the concentration of Bt protein required to kill 90% of larvae tested.

<sup>b</sup>All chi-square values in this test were significant ( $P < 0.05$ )

<sup>c</sup>Degrees of freedom.

**Table 2.** Neonate mortality (%) of *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* and *H. armigera* on leaf discs of Bt soybean events and an isogenic negative check in laboratory bioassays.

| Soybean event                        | Bt protein expressed       | Soybean growth stage <sup>a</sup> |               |               |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                      |                            | V4                                | R1–R2         | R5            |
| <b><i>Anticarsia gemmatalis</i></b>  |                            |                                   |               |               |
| MON 87751 × MON 87701                | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87751                            | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2         | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87701                            | Cry1Ac                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A845232                              | Cry1A.105                  | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A844620                              | Cry2Ab2                    | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| Isogenic negative check              | -                          | 3.1 ± 1.2 b                       | 13.5 ± 6.7 b  | 4.2 ± 0.0 b   |
| <b><i>Chrysodeixis includens</i></b> |                            |                                   |               |               |
| MON 87751 × MON 87701                | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87751                            | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2         | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87701                            | Cry1Ac                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A845232                              | Cry1A.105                  | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A844620                              | Cry2Ab2                    | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| Isogenic negative check              | -                          | 10.4 ± 3.6 b                      | 10.4 ± 4.3 b  | 9.4 ± 3.1 b   |
| <b><i>Helicoverpa armigera</i></b>   |                            |                                   |               |               |
| MON 87751 × MON 87701                | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87751                            | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2         | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| MON 87701                            | Cry1Ac                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A845232                              | Cry1A.105                  | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 100.0 ± 0.0 a | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| A844620                              | Cry2Ab2                    | 100.0 ± 0.0 a                     | 97.9 ± 1.2 a  | 100.0 ± 0.0 a |
| Isogenic negative check              | -                          | 6.3 ± 1.2 b                       | 18.8 ± 2.1 b  | 14.6 ± 5.6 b  |

<sup>a</sup>Values represent means ± SE after correction based on isogenic negative check. There were statistically significant differences (*t*-tests,  $P < 0.05$ ) between Bt soybean events and the isogenic negative check at all soybean growth stages and for all lepidopteran species evaluated.

**Table 3.** Larval and pupal incidence (larvae and pupae.meter of row<sup>-1</sup>) and damage (percent defoliation) on Bt soybean plants compared with isogenic negative checks after infestation with *C. includens* in a greenhouse trial during the 2014/15 season (Santa Cruz das Palmeiras, São Paulo, Brazil).

| Soybean event           | Bt protein expressed       | Larval incidence <sup>a</sup> | Pupal incidence <sup>a</sup> | Defoliation (%) <sup>a</sup> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| MON 87751 × MON 87701   | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  |
| MON 87751               | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2         | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  |
| MON 87701               | Cry1Ac                     | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                   | 1.0 ± 1.0 b                  | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                  |
| A845232                 | Cry1A.105                  | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                  |
| A844620                 | Cry2Ab2                    | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                   | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                  | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  |
| Isogenic negative check | -                          | 17.7 ± 4.9 a                  | 27.8 ± 2.4 a                 | 50.0 ± 6.0 a                 |

<sup>a</sup>Values represent means ± SE. There were statistically significant differences (*t*-tests, *P* < 0.05) between Bt soybean plants and the isogenic negative check for all the performance measurements.

**Table 4.** Larval incidence (larvae.meter of row<sup>-1</sup>) and damage (percent defoliation and pods damaged) on Bt soybean plants compared with isogenic negative checks after infestation with *H. armigera* in a greenhouse trial during the 2014/15 season (Santa Cruz das Palmeiras, São Paulo, Brazil).

| Soybean event            | Bt protein expressed       | Larval incidence <sup>a</sup> | Defoliation (%) <sup>a</sup> | Pods damaged (%) <sup>a</sup> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| MON 87751 × MON 87701    | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 0.5 ± 0.3 b                   | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                  | 2.1 ± 0.5 b                   |
| MON 87751                | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2         | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 1.2 ± 0.4 b                   |
| MON 87701                | Cry1Ac                     | 0.1 ± 0.1 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 1.7 ± 0.3 b                   |
| A845232                  | Cry1A.105                  | 0.2 ± 0.1 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 1.2 ± 0.4 b                   |
| A844620                  | Cry2Ab2                    | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                   | 0.0 ± 0.0 b                  | 1.6 ± 0.4 b                   |
| Isogenic negative checks | -                          | 33.6 ± 5.9 a                  | 50.0 ± 0.0 a                 | 99.0 ± 0.1 a                  |

<sup>a</sup>Values represent means ± SE. There were statistically significant differences (*t*-tests, *P* < 0.05) between Bt soybean plants and the isogenic negative check for all the performance measurements.

**Table 5.** Larval incidence of *C. includens* and defoliation on Bt soybean events compared with isogenic negative check after natural infestation in field trials during the 2018/2019 soybean season (Não-Me-Toque, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil).

| Soybean event  | Bt protein expressed       | Soybean growth stage <sup>a</sup> |               |               |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|  |                            | R1–R2                             | R3–R4         | R5–R6         |
| <b>Larval incidence (larvae.meter of row<sup>-1</sup>)</b> |                            |                                   |               |               |
| MON 87751 × MON 87708 × MON 87701 × MON 89788              | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 0.00 ± 0.00 b                     | 0.00 ± 0.00 b | 0.00 ± 0.00 b |
| MON 87701 × MON 89788                                      | Cry1Ac                     | 0.03 ± 0.12 b                     | 0.12 ± 0.34 b | 0.03 ± 0.12 b |
| Isogenic negative check                                    | -                          | 3.43 ± 1.20 a                     | 3.93 ± 2.29 a | 3.87 ± 2.40 a |
| <b>Defoliation (%)</b>                                     |                            |                                   |               |               |
| MON 87751 × MON 87708 × MON 87701 × MON 89788              | Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2, Cry1Ac | 0.0 ± 0.0 c                       | 1.25 ± 0.55 c | 0.93 ± 0.50 c |
| MON 87701 × MON 89788                                      | Cry1Ac                     | 2.18 ± 0.21 b                     | 5.31 ± 0.71 b | 3.43 ± 0.59 b |
| Isogenic negative check                                    | -                          | 9.06 ± 0.31 a                     | 26.5 ± 0.59 a | 28.5 ± 0.45 a |

<sup>a</sup>Values represent means ± SE. There were statistically significant differences (*t*-tests, *P* < 0.05) between Bt

soybean plants and the isogenic negative check for all the performance measurements.

## 4 DISCUSSÃO

Os lepidópteros pragas da soja *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera* foram suscetíveis as proteínas inseticidas Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 e Cry1Ac expressas na soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 quando aplicadas na superfície de uma dieta artificial. Em estudos com discos de folha, infestação artificial em casa de vegetação e infestação natural a campo, a soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 também foi eficaz no controle de *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera*, indicando que esse evento de soja Bt atende o conceito de “pirâmide de genes” para o manejo da resistência. Ao combinar duas ou mais proteínas Bt ativas contra o mesmo inseto-praga existe a possibilidade de retardar a evolução a resistência de forma mais efetiva, visto que, a frequência de resistência tende a ser baixa para as proteínas piramidadas (ROUSH, 1998; HEAD & GREENPLATE, 2012; CARRIÈRE; FABRICK; TABASHNIK, 2016).

Eficácia similar para as mesmas espécies-praga foram previamente reportados para soja MON87701 × MON89788 que expressa Cry1Ac (Intacta RR2 PRO®) (BERNARDI, O. et al., 2012; DOURADO et al., 2016). Desde o início do cultivo da soja Intacta RR2 PRO®, houve uma adoção crescente dessa tecnologia e, consequentemente, uma maior pressão de seleção para resistência à Cry1Ac em populações das pragas-alvo de controle. Em estudos de monitoramento inicial em pré-lançamento da soja Intacta RR2 PRO®, a frequência do alelo de resistência demonstrou ser baixa em populações de *C. includens* do Brasil – frequência estimada de 0.0004 (YANO et al., 2015). Após 5 anos de cultivo a frequência do alelo de resistência continua baixa (dados não publicados), demonstrando que essa tecnologia tem sido eficaz em retardar a evolução da resistência (MACRAE et al., 2005, BERNARDI, O. et al., 2012; BERNARDI, O. et al., 2014; YANO et al., 2015).

A preocupação com a evolução da resistência, devido a baixa adoção de áreas de refúgio e ampla adoção da soja Intacta RR2 PRO®, incentivaram o desenvolvimento de um evento de soja que expressa mais de uma proteína Bt (soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788). O uso dessa tecnologia tende a favorecer o manejo da resistência de insetos, desde que a frequência do alelo de resistência para cada uma das proteínas Bt se mantenha baixa. Nesse sentido, para garantir a sustentabilidade da soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 para o MIP e MRI das principais lagartas desfolhadoras da soja no Brasil se faz necessário a adoção de áreas refúgio conforme as orientações do detentor da tecnologia: 20% de área de soja Bt deve ser cultivada com variedades de soja não-Bt (refúgio estruturado) a no

máximo 800 metros da lavoura com soja Bt. Além disso, o uso da soja Bt associada a outras estratégias de MIP também contribuirá para prolongar a vida útil dessa tecnologia.

## 5 CONCLUSÃO

As proteínas Cry1A.105, Cry2Ab2 e Cry1Ac expressas no evento de soja MON87751 × MON87708 × MON87701 × MON89788 foram eficazes no controle de *A. gemmatalis*, *C. includens* e *H. armigera*, atendendo a um importante critério de pirâmide de genes, o conceito de mortalidade redundante, para o manejo da resistência de insetos.

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