Biology and rate of food consumption of banana skipper

*Erionota torus* Evans (Hesperiidae: Lepidoptera)

Sharanabasappa*, C. M. Kalleshwaraswamy, M. N. Lavanya and D. Pallavi

*Department of Agricultural Entomology, College of Agriculture, UAHS Shivamogga 577 225, Karnataka, India. Email: sharanu.deshmukh@gmail.com*

**ABSTRACT:** Studies on life history of banana skipper, *Erionota torus* indicated female laid eggs in clusters on the under surface of the leaves of the banana plant. Incubation, total larval and pupal period ranged from 7 - 9 days, 26 - 33 days and 10 - 12 days, respectively. Fecundity of the female ranged from 18 - 29 eggs. The amount of food consumed increased from II to V instars (10.28, 23.13, 25.01 and 41.56 % respectively). The weight gain in third instar was 33.51% of total larval weight. The values of growth rate (GR) decreased from II to V instar, the values varied between 0.03 and 0.16 g/day/g. Consumption index ranged between 0.64 and 2.15 g/day/g. The indices of food utilization efficiencies namely; AD values ranged from 80.89 to 97.86%, ECI 6.86 to 13.00 % and ECD 7.90 to 15.90%.

**KEY WORDS:** Banana, *Erionota torus*, life history and food consumption rate

**INTRODUCTION**

The banana skipper or banana leaf-roller or red eye skipper, *Erionota torus* Evans, is a common banana pest in continental Southeast Asia, ranging from Sikkim to south China, Burma, Malaya and Vietnam (Corbet and Pendlebury, 1978; Inoue and Kawazoe, 1970: Okolle *et al.*, 2006). In India, it appears that *Erionota torus* is the correct identity of the banana skipper which was earlier reported as *Erionota thrax*. It has been reported from Calcutta and Assam (Wynter Blyth, 1957); from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Veenakumari and Mohanraj, 1991), Manipur (Prasad and Singh, 1987; Singh, 1997), Palani Hills (Ghorpade and Kunte, 2010), Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh (Tipple and Ghorpade, 2012), north districts of Kerala (Sivakumar *et al.*, 2014), Coimbatore and Erode Districts of Tamil Nadu and Chamrajnagar District (Padmanaban, 2014), Bangalore (Kamala jayanthi *et al.*, 2015) of Karnataka. The current outbreaks in South India (Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh) may be due to the absence of insecticidal applications coupled with low prevalence of natural enemies and possible climate shifts that would have helped the banana skipper populations to reach damaging thresholds (Raju *et al.*, 2015). The larva causes considerable damage to banana foliage by rolling the leaf while feeding on it (Chiang and Hwang, 1991). The larvae of these butterflies can cause mean defoliation of about 60 per cent, leading to yield loss of about 20 per cent (Okolle *et al.*, 2010). During September 2014, there was an out break of *Erionota torus* in Coastal belts of Karnataka (Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttar Kannada) and then spread to Malnad districts of Karnataka. This pest was so far not reported from this region either as a major