

Technical Workshop on Locusts in Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA)
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 12-16 November 2012
Regional cooperation: Joint or Cross-Border Survey (CBS) - Report -

- Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda -

The following joint or cross-border surveys (CBS) were carried out in 2012 in the framework of the “Five-year Programme to improve national and regional locust management in Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA)”, against USAID funding:

- Kyrgyzstan & Uzbekistan, April 2012
- Georgia, Azerbaijan & Armenia, April 2012
- Afghanistan & Tajikistan, June 2012.
- Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan, July 2012.

Presentation on this activity will be made by the concerned countries during the workshop (See *ad hoc* template). Three out of the four CBS were carried out in presence of a FAO International Consultant, Locust Expert. The below text reflects their points of view.

- **Kyrgyzstan & Uzbekistan, April 2012**

Short description: a CBS between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan took place on 21-23 April 2012 in three provinces of Uzbekistan (Namangan, Andijan and Fergana) and two provinces of Kyrgyzstan (Osh and Jalal-Abad). The survey team consisted of three members from each country and an FAO Consultant. In addition, a total of 20 local specialists from Uzbekistan and three from Kyrgyzstan participated in CBS at the district level in the field. The timing was chosen to coincide with hatching of the *Dociostaurus maroccanus* (Thunberg 1815), the Moroccan Locust (DMA) ; however, because of the late spring, only sporadic hatching was noticed on a single site in Kyrgyzstan. Despite a very short window of time, the total area surveyed was of 10,000 ha. The CBS concentrated on foothills with native rangeland (steppe) vegetation along the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan which are known to serve as DMA egg-beds and sources of subsequent crop infestations. Participants practiced in the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) units and filled out the CCA Standard Survey Forms. A joint report (“Act”) based on the CBS findings was produced, signed by all participants and submitted to Ministry of Agriculture in each country.

Main conclusions: the CBS confirmed that steppe areas in the foothill zone between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan provide a suitable habitat for DMA oviposition. Most of such

areas are situated on the Kyrgyzstan side at a higher altitude than on the Uzbekistan side and are used as pastures for livestock. After hatching there, DMA hopper bands and swarms descend into valleys and threaten crops in both countries. Numerous cases of different crop and orchard damage by DMA were documented in Uzbekistan during the previous years in the vicinity of the Kyrgyzstan border. During outbreaks, the potentially infested areas are very significant in Batken, Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces of Kyrgyzstan but damage are mainly reported in Uzbekistan, where there are more cropping areas than on the Kyrgyz side (mostly pastures). The technical and staff capacities of the Kyrgyz Department of Chemicalization and Plant Protection are insufficient to effectively and rapidly monitor all suspect areas, so mutual collaboration with the Uzbek side is critical for successful locust survey and management. The current CBS was an important step towards enhanced anti-locust cooperation and information sharing between the two countries.

Recommendations:

- Because of difficult relief and vast areas to cover, future CBS between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan should be planned for a period of seven to ten days, with three to four days in Uzbekistan and four to six days in Kyrgyzstan;
 - During DMA outbreaks, CBS should take place twice a season, during hatching and during oviposition;
 - Results of CBS should be communicated to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan locust managers at all levels to facilitate decision-making;
 - If an FAO international consultant participates in future CBS, it is highly recommended that he/she should possess a UN Laissez-Passer to expedite crossing the border.
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- **Georgia, Azerbaijan & Armenia, April 2012**

Short description: a joint locust survey between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia was carried out in Georgia during two days, on 25 and 26 April 2012. The survey team was composed of nine locust specialists: four from Georgia, three from Azerbaijan and two from Armenia; it was accompanied by an FAO Consultant. The survey was carried out in Dedoplistskaro area, Kakheti region, using 3 vehicles and covering nearly 300 km field trip. The choice of the itinerary had been done on the basis of historical knowledge of locust breeding areas.

Given the absence of locusts in the surveyed areas due to cold weather which had delayed hatching, simulation exercises were conducted to allow participants to practice on techniques for estimating locust densities, infested areas and how to search and estimate the egg-pod density. Participants were also trained on how to read maps, use Geographical Positioning System (GPS), fill in the CCA Standard Survey Form and prepare the national monthly bulletin.

Main conclusions: the joint survey was a good opportunity for the concerned countries to harmonize their approach and techniques in monitoring locusts in Caucasus. The participants expressed his satisfaction regarding all techniques they had learned during the joint survey. They believed that they gained sufficient experience and abilities in

conducting locust surveys and gathering the required information in the best effective and efficient way.

Recommendation:

- It is of utmost importance to choose the most appropriate persons in terms of profile, experience and age to attend these joint surveys in order to ensure greater sustainability of good locust monitoring practices and good quality of information.
- **Afghanistan & Tajikistan, June 2012.**

Short description: a joint locust survey between Tajikistan and Afghanistan was organized in Tajikistan from 30 May to 3 June 2012. An eight-member team consisting of locust specialists from Tajikistan (5) and Afghanistan (3), accompanied by a FAO consultant, carried out surveys in Khatlon Province using 3 vehicles and covering a distance of 750 km from Kurgant'yube to the Afghan border during the five-day field trip. The itinerary of the survey focused on potential areas of locust presence and breeding, particularly along the Tajik-Afghan border. Five districts were visited: Pyanj, Qumsangir, Farkhor, Hamadoni and Jilikul.

The bases of survey were observations made at the survey stops. The survey parameters at each location are those of the CCA Standard Survey Form. At each stop, the locust density was assessed through 200-meter foot transects in the vegetation or by counting the number of locusts per square meter when adults were copulating and laying eggs. During the survey, some information was also provided on biology, ecology and behavior of the Moroccan Locust. Demonstrations on the use of some locust survey equipment, such as hygrometer to measure the humidity and GPS for navigation and calculation of the infested area, were also provided.

Main conclusions: the survey resulted in the identification of many infestations by the Moroccan Locust in Khatlon Province. The survey highlighted the usefulness of familiarizing locust survey officers from both countries with breeding areas to understand better the locust situation and to get an idea on the likely developments of the locust populations. It allowed an exchange of technical experiences in terms of surveying, data collection, reporting and use of maps and GPS, and facilitated the strengthening of cooperation and collaboration between the two countries. It was also an opportunity to see how assessment surveys can be organized involving staff from the two countries. Lastly, the joint survey contributed to maintain a strong regional information network that is the foundation for preventive control strategy.

The participants felt that the organization of such survey on a regular basis was needed to assess the locust situation along the common border.

Recommendations:

- Joint surveys between Afghanistan and Tajikistan should be pursued in the coming years to monitor locust activity on both sides of the border and to seek for any possible movement or migration of locust populations across the border.
- Such cross-border activities should be regulated by bilateral agreements between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.
- The experts participating in the joint survey must be experienced and well informed of survey procedures.
- The survey officers are requested to fill the CCA Standard Survey Form during surveys in the field.
- Participants underlined the necessity to enhance information sharing and exchange within the region. Electronic information exchange was considered the best way to do that. For instance the monthly national bulletin should be exchange by email on a regular basis, or posted on a FAO Repository accessible to all CCA countries, in addition to the monthly regional bulletin.