



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(21 April 2004)



General Situation as of 20 April 2004

Despite intensive control operations, the situation remains extremely serious in Northwest Africa. Widespread laying, hatching and band formation are in progress in the spring breeding areas south of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Algeria. Some swarms have moved into western Libya. New swarms are forming in northern Mauritania where more crop damage was reported. The situation is less serious in the Central Region where only small hopper band infestations are present in northern Sudan and on the Red Sea coast in Saudi Arabia.

Hatching and band formation are in progress in the Draa Valley south of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. By mid-month, hoppers had reached the third instar stage. Swarm laying continued further north in the Anti-Atlas Mountains and in the Souss Valley. Late instar bands and immature adults were present in the Western Sahara. Ground and aerial control operations treated nearly 300,000 ha on 1-18 April. In Algeria, control operations are in underway against swarms that laid eggs south of the Atlas Mountains between Morocco and Tunisia. Hatching and band formation may have commenced. Further details are awaited. During the first week of April, several mature swarms and adult groups moved further east across Algeria into western Libya and laid eggs between Nalut and Ghat. Ground control operations treated 3,647 ha on 1-10 April. Similar infestations may be present in southern Tunisia. Good rains fell for two days at mid-month in the spring breeding areas from Morocco to western Libya.

In Mauritania, new swarms have started to form in the north where hopper bands are present and additional damage was reported to dates and palms. Control operations are hampered by limited resources and treated only 5,300 ha on 11-18 April. In Niger, many late instar hopper bands mixed with new hatchlings and fledglings are present on in the southeastern Air Mountains where 500 ha were treated. No locusts were seen in northern Mali except for one isolated adult.

In Saudi Arabia, a few small early instar hopper bands were reported on the northern Red Sea coast near Yenbo. Ground control operations treated 435 ha on 1-10 April. In northern Sudan, ground control operations continue against numerous small hopper bands near Dongola and Abu Hamed, treating 465 ha on 1-18 April. No locusts were seen on the Red Sea coastal plains in Sudan.

The most up-to-date information on the situation and photos are available on the Internet (www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm) as well as maps of the latest infestations (193.43.36.11/mapper).

The FAO Desert Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by fax, e-mail, FAO pouch and airmail by the Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, AGP Division, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is also available on the Internet.

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