



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(14 June 2004)



General Situation as of 14 June 2004

The Desert Locust situation continues to remain extremely alarming despite intensive aerial and ground control operations against hopper bands in Northwest Africa. New groups of adults are forming in Morocco, Algeria and Libya. Several swarms were seen near the summer breeding areas in southern Mauritania. In the coming weeks, locust numbers are expected to increase dramatically in the Sahel in West Africa as swarms that form and escape current control operations in Northwest Africa move southwards and appear in areas of recent rainfall.

During the first decade of June, vegetation started to dry out south of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco where hopper bands at densities of up to 800 hoppers/m² continued to develop and fledge, and groups of adults were forming at densities of up to 120 adults/m². Ground and aerial control operations treated 183,422 ha from 31 May to 10 June. In Algeria, more hopper bands reached the fifth instar stage south of the Atlas Mountains during the same period as temperatures increased. The heaviest infestations were reported from Naama, El Bayadh, Djelfa, Laghouat, Biska and El Oued provinces. Hoppers were fledging and new adult groups were forming in many of the above provinces. Low-density hatching occurred in El Oued and Naama on 1-2 June, and a few residual populations of mature adults were present in other places. Ground and aerial control operations treated 175,872 ha on 1-9 June. Ground and aerial operations continue in southern Tunisia and northwestern Libya against late instar

hopper bands and some adults. In Libya, 21,208 ha were treated on 1-10 June. No details were available from Tunisia.

In the past few days, several immature swarms were reported in western Mauritania where they were seen moving towards the south. One medium-sized swarm of 44 km² was observed between Nouakchott and Akjoujt on 8 June while another one was being confirmed near Boutilimit. These probably originated from previous breeding in northern Mauritania where groups of hoppers and adults, at densities up to 15 adults/m², are still present. In the summer breeding areas in the south, isolated adults were maturing northwest of Kiffa and southwest of Nema. Ground control operations treated 270 ha of late instar hopper groups in the north on 1-10 June. No new information has been received from Mali where scattered adults are likely to be present in the north. Although no new reports were received from Niger, new hatchlings and adult groups are probably present in the Air Mountains.

So far this month, light rains have fallen in southeastern Mauritania, western and northern Mali, southern Algeria and western Niger. Appropriate preparations should be made immediately in these countries for any swarms that arrive from Northwest Africa.

Elsewhere, no locusts were seen in the spring breeding areas in the interior of Saudi Arabia in late May. There was an unconfirmed report in early June of a locust swarm near Geneina in western Darfur, Sudan. This was probably Tree Locust rather than Desert Locust.

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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