



# DESERT LOCUST ALERT

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(17 October 2003)



## General Situation as of 16 October 2003 Forecast until mid-November 2003

During the past two weeks, new Desert Locust outbreaks developed in Mauritania and Sudan and control operations have commenced. Another outbreak is in progress in Niger, and the situation continues to be of concern in Mali. Immediate action has been taken by FAO and the affected countries to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

Vegetation has dried out much quicker than expected in Mauritania, causing locusts to concentrate in three main areas. Adults are forming dense groups (up to 40 per sq. m) and becoming gregarious east of Akjoujt (1945N/1421W) where egg laying is in process. On 13 October, hatching started and small dense first instar hopper patches were forming. Early instar solitary and transiens hoppers at densities up to three per bush are present northwest of Moudjeria (1751N/1228W). Adult groups at densities up to 9,000 per ha were seen copulating east of Nouakchott. Control operations started on 9 October in all of these areas and have treated 111 ha so far. Elsewhere, immature adults persisted near Aioun El Atrous (1702N/0941W). Additional teams have been sent to the field, bringing the total to five survey teams and two control teams. Breeding conditions are favourable in the northwest. A report of solitary adults at a density of 600 per ha about 150 km northwest of Akjoujt suggests that some locusts could move into southern Morocco in the coming weeks.

The situation continues to be of concern in northern Mali where locust densities increased in early October and could eventually threaten southern Algeria. Solitary adults, at densities up to 900 per ha, are maturing at 30 places northeast of Kidal (1827N/0125E), between Tessalit (2011N/0102E) and the Algerian border, and in the Tilemsi Valley. Low numbers of hoppers were seen at about half of these locations. In a few places, there were up to six hoppers per bush and they were beginning to group and become transiens. Two teams are continuing surveys in Timetrine, the Tilemsi Valley and the Adrar des Iforas until 19 October. This will be followed by an additional survey in early November.

A locust outbreak is in progress in Niger where groups of immature adults (up to 50,000 per ha) and transiens hopper groups (up to 20 hoppers per sq. m) are present at many places in Tamesna. Two teams are currently working in Tamesna and Air. FAO is organizing field trials using the Green Muscle (*Metarhizium*) biopesticide.

In Sudan, an outbreak has developed in the northeast near Atbara (1742N/3400E) where three maturing swarms were first seen on 10-12 October along the Atbara River, followed by several other small swarms; in total, about 3400 ha. Some of the swarms were laying eggs. Control operations started on the 15th and 533 ha have been treated so far. Mature adults at densities up to 10,000 per ha are present about 100 km northwest of Kassala (1424N/3630E). Elsewhere, hoppers and adults are present near Shendi (1641N/3322E). Survey and control operations are in progress, and five aircraft are on standby.

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