



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(16 Sep 2004)



General Situation as of 15 September 2004
Medium-term forecast to Spring 2005

Widespread breeding continued during the first half of September throughout the Sahelian Zone in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger and, to a lesser extent, Burkina Faso. Hopper bands are rapidly developing in all countries. Summer generation swarms continued to form in southeastern Mauritania. Smaller-scale breeding is in progress in Cape Verde and Chad. Some three to four million hectares may be infested in the Sahel in West Africa. A substantial number of swarms will form in the Sahel in the coming days and during October. Although some of these swarms may stay put and could breed again in the next two months, the majority of the swarms will move to west and northwest Mauritania and breed there while others are expected to reinvade Senegal and move south towards Guinea. There is a risk that Northwest Africa will be reinvaded by swarms from October onwards. Significant damage to crops and pasture has been reported, and is expected to affect food security in Mauritania, Mali, Senegal and Niger. Nearly 300,000 ha have been treated in West Africa so far this summer. With the expansion of aerial spraying capacity currently under way, the rate of control is likely to increase considerably. The medium-term forecast suggests that a large number of hopper bands could form in the spring breeding areas in Northwest Africa next year.

New swarms continued to form in the southern and southeast **Mauritania** during the first half of September. Vegetation is starting to dry out in the latter area and some immature swarms have moved to the centre of the country where breeding is in progress. In all, some 1.6 million ha could be infested in the summer breeding area. Control operations treated more than 44,000 ha from 1 to 10 September. During the same period, a dozen mature swarms were seen in northern and central **Senegal** where more laying, hatching and band formation occurred. Bands had reached the fifth instar in some places by mid-month. Control operations treated more than 46,000 ha from 1 to 10 September. In **Mali**, hopper bands are present and developing in the regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, Segou, Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao. Smaller infestations are present in the north near Kidal. Control operations treated nearly 37,000 ha from 1 to 10 September. In **Niger**, mature swarms and hopper bands were present during the first decade of September in southern Tamesna and in crops in the Sahelian zone. Many of the hoppers started fledging early in the month. An estimated 800,000 ha are infested. Control operations treated nearly 27,000 ha from 1 to 10 September.

In **Burkina Faso**, more hopper bands, at densities up to 10,000 hoppers/m², have been reported in two provinces in the north near the Mali border. So far, 400 ha have been treated. In **Chad**, small-scale breeding is in progress in the central province of Batha and in the east near Biltine where scattered adults and first instar hoppers were present in early September. On 3 September, a 7 km² swarm was seen near Kalait less than 100 km from the Sudanese border. In **Cape Verde**, hatching occurred in August and early September, and first to third instar hopper bands, at densities up to 1,000 hoppers/m², were reported in a few places on Santiago Island. More than 160 ha have been treated to date.

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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In **Sudan**, small-scale breeding continues in Northern Kordofan. There have been no reports of locust infestations in Darfur.



Medium-term forecast to Spring 2005

Northwest Africa. A substantial number of swarms will almost certainly reinvade the Region between October and March. Swarms that form in the Sahel this summer will most likely arrive in northwest **Mauritania**, in the Awssard-Tichla region in **Western Sahara** and in the southern Sahara in **Algeria** from early October onwards and progressively move northwards during November. Although the swarms are likely to be immature, they could mature quickly and lay eggs during November if rain falls in these areas. Some swarms may also appear in southwestern **Libya**. Under favourable weather conditions, swarms will move further north and reach the traditional spring breeding areas along the southern side of the Atlas Mountains in **Morocco** and Algeria as well as southern **Tunisia** and northwestern Libya at any time between October and March. Once temperatures increase in these areas (usually in about March), egg-laying and hatching will occur and a large number of hopper bands could form. The scale of the invasion from the Sahel and subsequent breeding depends on the success of survey and control operations this summer and on the quantity, distribution and frequency of rainfall in the coming months. Nevertheless, it is likely to be on a larger scale than that in the spring of 2004.

West Africa. A substantial number of swarms is expected to form in currently infested areas during September and October. Most of these swarms will move towards west and northwest **Mauritania** from October onwards where they will concentrate and mature. A few swarms could reach northern Mauritania where breeding normally occurs from February onwards. A small portion of the swarms that form this summer in the Sahel will reinvade northern **Senegal** in October and progressively move southwards, invading **Gambia**, southern Senegal and **Guinea Bissau** where egg-laying could occur in November. Some swarms could reach **Guinea** by the end of the year or early 2005. There is a possibility that a second generation of breeding could occur in parts of the Sahel and in northern **Mali** (Adrar des Iforas, Tamesna) and **Niger** (Tamesna, Air Mountains) by swarms that remain *in situ*, mature and lay eggs, giving rise to hopper bands in about November. The swarms that subsequently form from these hopper

bands in northern Mali and Niger are expected to move towards the north and northwest, while those that form further south in the Sahelian zone will most likely move towards the west, reinvading Senegal towards the end of the year.

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).



15 Sep 2004