



# ECLO Operations Report

## EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR LOCUST OPERATIONS

# Environmental training

Reducing the risk of locust control operations to human health and the environment will be the focus of a two-week regional training course in Mauritania (13-23 April 2005). The course will be hosted by the centre for research and training at the Centre de lutte antiacridienne (CLAA) in Akjoujt.

The themes of the course include good application practice, safety of workers and inhabitants, selective treatment and proper handling of empty packages and remainders.

FAO's Emergency Centre for Locust Operations has organized the training in collaboration with the CLAA and the Dakar-based CERES-Locustox.

Among those attending the training will be trainee doctors and nurses, environmental officials and technicians involved in the fight against the Desert Locust in West Africa. They will then pass on their knowledge to colleagues in their own countries.

## Informal donors' meeting

FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, which participates in the Emergency Centre for Locust Control, is organizing an informal donors' meeting at FAO headquarters on 1 March 2005.

The meeting will cover all of the division's current emergency operations, including the tsunami and avian flu, but there will also be a presentation dealing with the locust situation, followed by a discussion and questions.

A technical expert from FAO's Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, Mr. Keith Cressman, will tell the meeting that although the locust situation is improving in northwest Africa, continued vigilance is essential and survey and control operations should be maintained to avoid the situation deteriorating in the spring.

## SITUATION UPDATE

as of 22  
February

*The Desert Locust situation continues to improve in Northwest Africa," says Keith Cressman, ECLO's Locust Forecasting Officer. "Control operations are in progress against immature swarms mainly in **Algeria** and to a much lesser extent in **Morocco**. Smaller infestations are probably present in **Tunisia**.*

*Unusually cold weather continues to delay locust maturation. As locusts are not present in **Mauritania** and winter breeding has failed in the north, a swarm invasion of northwest Africa is not expected this spring.*

*Nevertheless, breeding will occur during the spring along the southern side of the Atlas Mountains and, consequently, survey and control operations must be maintained. Control operations are in progress against a few immature swarms in southern **Senegal**, **Guinea Bissau** and **Guinea**. Recently, a few swarms reached the coast of Guinea near Conakry and crop damage has been reported.*

*Small-scale breeding is in progress and hopper bands continue to form on the Red Sea coast in northeast **Sudan** and in adjacent areas of southeast **Egypt**. The situation requires intensive monitoring and appropriate control measures should be taken.*

### Funding update

- As of 23 February 2005, FAO had received US\$65 million in cash, to which the Organization has added US\$6.2 million of its own funds.
- US\$8.84 million has been pledged.
- US\$2.07 million is currently being negotiated with donors.

## Workshop in Rome: a review of the aerial spraying campaign in 2004 and a look ahead to summer 2005

Learning lessons from last year's Desert Locust control campaign is the theme of a workshop organized by FAO and taking place from 28 February to 4 March 2005. The workshop's objective is to share experiences and develop methodologies to make operations more efficient and cost-effective.

The workshop is being held at FAO's Rome headquarters and will focus on aerial spraying contracts and operations undertaken during the locust control campaign in summer 2004. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on the specialized equipment each aircraft should carry for accurate spraying, how to organise logistics so that aircraft are as close as

possible to their targets, clarifying the role of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft and making contracts easier to follow under field conditions.

The participants will include technical and operational experts from FAO, consultants working for the Organization in the field and representatives of air services companies. One of the principal outputs of the workshop will be the development of a ready-to-use model contract package including contract templates, tender documents and procedural directives.

As part of the preparation for the workshop, FAO asked the invited participants to note their observations on the aerial operations with which they were involved, and to contribute their ideas to the workshop as to how future operations could be made more effective.

## Better protection for human health and the environment from the dangers of pesticides

FAO has assisted national staff in the establishment of national action plans for the destruction of empty pesticide containers and the management of pesticide stocks.

This plan, in the case of Mauritania and Senegal, has been in operation since January 2005. Plans have just been activated in Chad, Mali and Niger. Essentially, the plans are designed to organise the collection of all pesticide containers, their cleaning, crushing and recycling. Empty pesticide containers still have chemical residues that are hazardous to human health and the environment.

The plans also seek to address the issue of storing and managing pesticide stocks built up over the summer 2004 Desert Locust control campaign.

In support of the national plan, an information campaign has been devised with the assistance of NGOs and local media to help make people aware of the danger of keeping pesticide containers for their private use.

In Niger, for example, the national plan will be supported by radio and television, which have the advantage

of being able to reach people throughout the country, and, above all, to communicate with people in local languages.

Two-minute TV and radio slots will be produced and aired in several languages (Hausa, Zerma, Kanuri, Peulh and Tamachek) informing people of the dangers of using empty pesticide containers after locust control operations, and inviting them to hand the containers over to local technical services for appropriate disposal.

This publicity blitz is aimed at reaching the maximum number of people. FAO has supported the authorities in each country with financial assistance to ensure that the resources required for each aspect of the national plans are made available.

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For more information on the desert locust situation, including operational activities, donor funding, country briefs and previous situation reports, go to  
<http://www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm>