



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(25 August 2005)



General Situation up to 25 August 2005

Most of the current Desert Locust activity is concentrated along both sides of the Chad/Sudan border and on the Red Sea coastal plains in northeast Eritrea. In the past few days, there have been a few unconfirmed reports of swarms in Chad. Ground control operations are in progress in the three countries. Local breeding is underway in the interior of Yemen. The situation is calmer in the western part of the Sahel in West Africa where only low numbers of solitary adults have been detected in Mauritania, Mali and Niger. As ecological conditions are unusually favourable for breeding, increased vigilance and intensive survey operations should be maintained in the Sahel in West Africa and Sudan.

The locust situation continues to be serious in **Chad** and western **Sudan** where breeding is in progress. Although helicopter surveys are underway in eastern Chad to confirm recent swarm reports, the extent of the infestations in the country is not well known because of the difficulty to access many of the infested areas. In Sudan, nearly 7,000 ha of hopper bands were treated during the first half of August in the few areas that can be accessed in Darfur. A limited number of small swarms could form during September in both countries. As long as ecological conditions remain favourable, the new swarms will probably remain in place, mature and eventually lay eggs, giving rise to a second generation of locusts.

Because of good rainfall during the past few months, unusually heavy local breeding has occurred on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea in **Eritrea** near the Sudanese border. More than 11,000 ha of hopper bands and adults were treated by ground teams during the first half of August. Any locusts that are not controlled could form several small swarms in September that may spread into adjacent areas of Sudan. Local breeding is also underway, but on a smaller scale, in the interior of **Yemen**. In **Ethiopia**, ground teams treated 158 ha of residual hopper populations in Tigray.

Despite unusually good and widespread rainfall and ecological conditions, the situation continues to remain calm in **Mauritania, Mali, Niger** and southern **Algeria** where only low numbers of scattered solitary adults have been found by surveys. Limited breeding has been reported in Mauritania and is probably in progress in the other countries. Control operations have not been required so far, except near Tamanrasset, Algeria where 320 ha were treated in mid August. Nevertheless, intensive ground surveys, supplemented by helicopters, are underway in the Sahel in order to detect the first signs that locust numbers might be increasing. This will probably become more evident once the rains end and vegetation starts to dry out.

Ground and aerial control operations have treated 12.9 million ha since the beginning of the current upsurge in October 2003.

The most up-to-date information on the situation is available on the new FAO locust web site (www.fao.org/ag/locusts).

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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