

ECLO Operations Report

EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR LOCUST OPERATIONS

First QUEST training held in Chad and Mali

The first two of six national QUEST (Quality and Environment Survey Team) training sessions were held in N'Djamena, Chad, 15–19 August, and in Bamako, Mali, 29 August–2 September.

In Chad, 11 participants from the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Health attended. The training, which was supervised by a national and an international consultant and the interim coordinator of the Subregional Desert Locust Office in Dakar, had a major practical component, being held in the field about 20 km southeast of N'Djamena. The EMPRES Liaison Officer, national staff from DPVC, and the Ministry of Health led most of the exercises which were related to calibrating spraying equipment, analysis of the blood of staff carrying out pesticide applications, impact on non-target fauna and issues of appropriate management of pesticides and empty containers. Lively discussions on the current practice of pesticide use in Chad followed the demonstrations, and the first group of DPVC staff had their blood tested to establish baseline levels. Before the end of August, the first QUEST team will set out to the field to test the blood of staff exposed to pesticides and to make them aware of the correct use and management of pesticides and containers, to avoid contamination. The latter activity was being identified as a priority.

In Mali, 16 participants from the Plant Protection and National Health Services and the Ministry of Environment attended the course. The issues discussed included an introduction to Desert Locust control; environmental toxicology; environmental chemistry, including environmental sampling; pesticide storage; and safety measures for pesticide handlers. Of particular impact were the sessions on testing the blood of individuals exposed to pesticides, storage and personal safety, barrier treatment against the Desert Locust and environmental sampling.

SITUATION UPDATE

as of 9 September

The Desert Locust situation is generally calm in the summer breeding areas in the Sahel in West Africa. Despite unusually good rainfall and ecological conditions, only isolated adults have been detected by intensive surveys in **Mauritania, Mali and Niger**. Scattered adults were seen recently in southwest **Libya** near Ghat. Previous infestations of hopper bands along both sides of the **Chad/Sudan** border have declined although there remains a low risk that a few small adult groups or swarms could form in eastern **Chad** and Darfur, **Sudan**. Infestations have also reportedly declined on the Red Sea coastal plains in **Eritrea**. Nevertheless, intensive surveys must be maintained in all countries during September and October in order to detect any signs that locust numbers might be increasing.



Environmental training of control operators in the field in Mali



QUEST training in Chad



Training on the theory of a GPS in Chad



Calibration of treatment equipment in Chad

Collaborative efforts to combat Desert Locust infestation in Eritrea

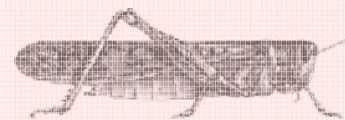
Collaboration between Senegal, Sudan, FAO and WFP is helping to control a significant infestation reported in Eritrea in late August. Initial observations suggested that, if the infestation is not controlled, an outbreak could develop. About 20 000 hectares were sprayed by national staff, but pesticide stocks were running out. In response to FAO requests, 15 000 litres of pesticides were donated by Senegal and 10 000 litres by Sudan. Aircraft were contracted through WFP to transport the pesticides to Eritrea, using funding provided by FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme. The shipment from Senegal was delivered on 23 August, and that from Sudan on 1 September. These amounts, in addition to 20 000 litres already in stock in Eritrea, should be sufficient to deal with the situation.

Farmers' confidence returning: More land being cultivated in Mauritania

It has been reported from Mauritania that the presence of the locust survey teams with their equipment in the field has resulted in raising the confidence of farmers. Whereas last year many farmers were afraid to plant crops, this year they see that good preparations have been made to deal with the locusts. They feel

sufficiently secure to plough and cultivate their fields.

In August, FAO Representation handed over vehicles and equipment to the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulics and Fisheries in Burkina Faso for use in Desert Locust control.



Meeting on the evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign, 29 August, Rome

A meeting was convened by FAO Director-General on 29 August 2005 that brought together more than 40 donor and affected-country representatives with FAO management to discuss the organization of the evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign, which is planned to start in September 2005. The main aim of the meeting was to achieve a consensus on the establishment of a representative steering committee for the evaluation and the organizational arrangements. The Director-General emphasized the need for the evaluation and major issues to be addressed. ECLO gave a presentation on the 2003-2004 Desert Locust campaign, the current locust situation, funding status and planned activities. Participants were then invited to present their views on the organization of the evaluation.

The initiative for the evaluation was supported by the participants. It was agreed that the evaluation must be a true partnership, and should secure the ownership of all those involved (the affected countries, bilateral donors, international financing institutions, developing donor countries and FAO).

It was agreed to hold the first steering committee meeting on 9 September 2005 to discuss issues of concern such as how to finance the evaluation. It was also advised that the participants should bring additional ideas to the table.

Special donor meeting in Chad

During the visit of the interim coordinator of the Subregional Desert Locust to Chad, a special donor meeting was organized by the FAO Representative on 23 August to inform the donors of the current locust situation and forecast for the coming period, the up-to-date state of the assistance to Chad channeled through FAO and the results from the QUEST training. The presence of the director of the DPVC, representing the Minister of Agriculture, and the EMPRES Liason Officer, permitted a lively discussion between the representatives of the donor community, FAO and the DPVC.



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Funding Update

- To date, funds received amount to US\$74.4, of which US\$68.1 million came from donors and US\$6.3 million from FAO.
- US\$51.2 million (69 percent of funds received) has been spent/committed for locust control operations.
- The balance of funds received is US\$23.2 million (US\$74.4 – US\$51.2).
- An additional amount of US\$6.2 million has been pledged by donors but not yet received.
- The total budget allocation for locust control operations is thus US\$80.6 million (US\$74.4 + US\$6.2).
- US\$1.6 million is still being negotiated with donors.