



ECLO Operations Report

EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR LOCUST OPERATIONS

SITUATION UPDATE as of 10 October

During September, small-scale breeding occurred in parts of the summer breeding areas in the Sahel in West Africa, causing locust numbers to increase slightly but still remaining relatively low and insignificant. Although rains declined in many of these areas and vegetation started to dry out by the end of the month, survey operations need to be maintained in order to check whether locust populations concentrate in the areas remaining green. Limited control operations were carried out against small infestations in southern Algeria and southwest Libya. In the Central Region, control teams treated hopper bands in Darfur, Sudan, while operations against hoppers and adults came to an end along the Red Sea coast of Eritrea. During the forecast period, locusts are likely to migrate to the Sudanese Red Sea coast. Intensive monitoring is required in the interior of Yemen where small-scale breeding continued for a second month and control operations were conducted. In Southwest Asia, limited control operations are underway in the summer breeding areas on both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border.

Recently, there have been reports in the media about swarms in Niger near the Mali border and other infestations in northern Nigeria. It has been confirmed that there are no swarms in Niger, and the infestations in Nigeria were not Desert Locust.

Desert Locust surveying continues in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger

Survey is conducted during October using helicopters and ground teams with financial assistance from donors through FAO. Monitoring the Desert Locust is critical during this period as it could either detect new outbreak areas or, if no locusts are found, lead to the phasing out of the locust emergency situation in the region.

Spray aircraft for Senegal to fight locusts

Senegal received the aircraft on 17 September 2005, thanks to Saudi Arabia's funding. FAO procured the aircraft according to the latest technological standards for safe and effective aerial locust control. The aircraft is fitted with ULV spray equipment, a GPS track guidance system and dual controls so that a trainee pilot can fly with an experienced pilot. It will be maintained by the Government of Senegal. FAO is providing training for pilots and mechanics. The inauguration of the aircraft witnessed the participation of (from left to right in the photo) the Director of the Senegalese Plant Protection Directorate, the FAO Representative, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Head of the Air Force.



Independent Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign

At the invitation of FAO's Director-General, more than 40 donor and locust-affected country representatives met at FAO in August to organize the multilateral evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust Campaign and set-up a Steering Committee. The Committee is composed of representatives of donors, locust-affected countries and FAO ECLO, with its secretariat provided by the FAO Evaluation Service. Subject to approval by the Steering Committee in October of the evaluation team, work plan, and methodology, it is planned that the evaluation team visits the locust-affected countries in West Africa during November/December. The evaluation results are expected by April 2006.

Awareness for better quality locust control and protection of the environment in the Sahel – FAO's QUEST training programme

TWO MORE QUEST TRAINING COURSES IN NIGER AND MAURITANIA

The successful training sessions in Chad and Mali during August/September were followed by two more FAO Quality and Environment Survey Team (QUEST) training courses in Niger and Mauritania during September.

In **Niger**, 11 participants from the Ministries of Agricultural Development; Public Health and Endemic Control; and Hydraulics, Environment and Desertification Control were trained from 11 to 15 September outside the town of Agadez, in the northern part of Niger. The trainees were hosted at the *Centre National Antiacridien* (CNA), whose director and national staff contributed significantly to the success of the training. The conditions in Agadez are close to those of a typical habitat that can support Desert Locust infestations. The training programme aims to build national QUEST capacities to handle quality control of pesticide treatments, environmental and human health monitoring and management of empty pesticide containers. These aspects are of concern whenever locust control operations are necessary.



In **Mauritania**, the course took place from 26 to 30 September in Nouakchott, with 12 participants from the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. One observer from *GRDR Française* (NGO) and two volunteers from the *Centre de Lutte Antiacridienne* (CLAA) also attended the training. The practical part of the programme was conducted in Quilidae, about 10 km northeast of Nouakchott, in typical locust habitat. CLAA provided the logistics for the course, including trainers, as the Centre has years of experience in environmental and human health monitoring related to locust control. The course was honoured by the visit of the Minister of Rural Development and Environment and the Ambassador of the United States of America.

The newly trained national QUEST staff is now conducting field work in Mauritania.



Personal protective equipment in use in Niger



Searching for non-target casualties after treatment in Niger

Both courses were organized by FAO's Subregional Desert Locust Coordination Office located in Senegal, Dakar, with funding from the European Commission for both countries. The course in Mauritania was co-funded by Luxemburg and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).



Training on the use of personal protective equipment in Mauritania

Future QUEST programmes in the Sahel

QUEST training initiated by FAO in the Sahel has paved the way for national teams in Chad and Mali to start their own quality and environmental programmes for locust control and to sensitize a large part of the public, from decision makers to local populations, on pesticide hazards.

Given the successful experience of the QUEST training, FAO is planning to extend the training programme to Senegal in 2005, and possibly Burkina Faso. In addition, FAO is conducting in Mali a practical training course on quality control during early October. The QUEST programme is also advocated by FAO for the Southern Circuit countries comprising (The Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau) and Cape Verde.

For further dissemination of knowledge, FAO is also preparing a curriculum on diagnostics and treatment of pesticide poisoning for medical doctors and pharmacists in Chad and Niger with the support of FAO's Subregional Desert Locust Office in Dakar, Senegal, together with the Centre National de Lutte Antiacridienne (CNLA) of Morocco.

An FAO brochure on environmental aspects of locust control to be published soon:

Fighting the locusts safely
Insecticides in Desert Locust control: balancing risks against benefits

The brochure will focus on the correct application of pesticides to control Desert Locust swarms or hopper bands while minimizing the adverse effects on human health and the environment.

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QUEST team at work in Chad

The QUEST team that was trained in **Chad** in August is now conducting field work. With the assistance of national consultants, the team measures cholinesterase levels of DPVC workers and farmers who were involved in the control campaign earlier this season. The team monitors pesticide warehouses and tests warehouse workers and families exposed to pesticides. Environmentally sensitive sites are identified to plan protective measures in case of future large-scale locust control. With the assistance of local authorities and NGOs, dams and wells constructed in recent years are inventoried.

The collaborative efforts in Eritrea pay off

Eritrea controlled significant Desert Locust infestations in the areas of Mehimet, Naro and Bada along the Red Sea coast, between July and September. The initial control operations were carried out with an emergency stock of pesticides provided under an FAO Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) in 2004 and with some other supplies held by Eritrea, but stocks began to run dangerously low. Eritrea asked for FAO's help in providing additional supplies. Senegal agreed to donate 15 000 litres of pesticides and the Sudan 10 000 litres to Eritrea. FAO's ECLO organized the air-freighting to Asmara, using WFP-contracted cargo planes, paid for by TCP funding.

Eritrea controlled over 23 530 hectares in Mehimet and Naro during August and 97 hectares during the first half of September. In Bada, 900 hectares were treated. No further control operations were needed, but the Red Sea coast must continue to be carefully surveyed, especially if further rains fall during the winter.

Funding Update

- To date, funds received amount to US\$74.8, of which US\$68.5 million came from donors and US\$6.3 million from FAO.
- US\$53.3 million (71 percent of funds received) has been spent/committed for locust control operations.
- The balance of funds received is US\$21.5 million.
- An additional amount of US\$5.8 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\$1.6 million is still being negotiated with donors.