

REPORT OF THE

**SIXTH SESSION OF
THE COMMISSION FOR
CONTROLLING THE DESERT LOCUST
IN THE EASTERN REGION
OF ITS DISTRIBUTION AREA
IN SOUTHWEST ASIA**

Held in Teheran, Iran

14-18 April 1970



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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Plant Production and Protection Division
 FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
 Rome, May 1970

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In accordance with the recommendation of the Fifth Session of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Eastern Region of its Distribution Area in South-West Asia, the Director-General of Agriculture of the United Nations, at the kind invitation of the Government of Iran, convened the fifth session of the Commission in Teheran, Iran, on 12 December 1968. The four Member Governments of the Commission, namely, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the United States of America, were represented by delegates and the Government of the United States of America by observers.

by Mr. H. S. Pruthi, Director-General of Agriculture, United Nations, as delegate and other participants. He expressed great satisfaction with the work done at regional level and the locust situation in the region was very satisfactory. He said, technical assistance should be given to the countries with India. In particular, he thanked the Government of Iran for their kind invitation to convene this session and for the facilities placed at the disposal of the Commission. He stressed the importance of surveys and stated that the plague was concentrated during the past few years in the area of the Commission. He stressed the importance of surveys and stated that the plague was concentrated during the past few years in the area of the Commission.

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The delegate of Iran and the FAO Secretariat formed the Drafting Committee.

Mr. Gurdas Singh and Mr. G. S. Pruthi of the FAO Secretariat acted as Technical Secretaries.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the recommendation of the Fifth Session of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Eastern Region of its Distribution Area in South-West Asia, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at the kind invitation of the Government of Iran, convened the Sixth Session of the Commission in Teheran from 14 to 18 April 1970. The four Member Governments of the Commission, namely, Afghanistan, India, Iran, and Pakistan were represented by delegates and the Government of the United States of America by observers.

The session was opened by His Excellency Mr. Iraj Vahidi, Minister of Agriculture, Government of Iran, who welcomed the delegates and other participants on behalf of the Government of Iran. He expressed great satisfaction at the concerted and coordinated efforts that had been made at regional and international level and which had helped to bring the locust situation in the entire locust belt under control. Iran, he said, was very much interested in international cooperation and coordination in technical matters. As early as 1944 Iran entered into a locust convention with India which was later continued with Pakistan also. In particular, he thanked FAO for the effective role played in bringing about international cooperation and coordination in the field of locust control. He also very much appreciated the prompt action taken by FAO for procuring assistance from different sources and helping various countries in dealing with a very dangerous situation during 1968. He also stressed the importance of field research on Desert Locust and stated that for any advancement research was of crucial importance. He emphasized that, while discussing the programme of work and budget for the current year, the delegates should give special consideration to the field of research in the region.

Mr. Gurdas Singh, FAO Desert Locust Specialist, speaking on behalf of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, thanked the Government of Iran for their kind invitation to convene this session in Teheran and for the hospitality and various other facilities placed at the disposal of the FAO Secretariat. He explained the overall locust situation with particular reference to the south-west Asian region and stated that the assistance provided and concerted efforts made by the various national and regional organizations in the areas where the plague was concentrated during 1968/69 played a major role in bringing the plague to the present level. He was grateful to His Excellency for stressing the importance of surveys and considered it necessary that all the countries should maintain sustained vigilance in their respective Desert Locust areas by undertaking regular surveys. As regards research, he fully agreed with him and hoped that the member governments would further intensify the research programmes at their field research stations.

Officers of the Session

The following officers were elected:

Chairman: Mr. Hossein Amin Madani, Iran

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Abdullah Faizyar, Afghanistan

The delegate of Iran and the FAO Secretariat formed the Drafting Committee.

Mr. Gurdas Singh and Mr. S.S. Pruthi of the FAO Secretariat acted as Technical Secretaries.

Acknowledgements

Before the close of the session the delegates expressed their great appreciation of the generous hospitality and facilities provided by the Government of Iran. They also thanked the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman for the efficient and courteous manner in which they had conducted the proceedings.

INTRODUCTION

The session was opened by His Excellency Mr. Jafar Vahidi, Minister of Agriculture, Government of Iran, who welcomed the delegates and other participants on behalf of the Government of Iran. He expressed great satisfaction at the concerted and coordinated efforts that had been made at regional and international level and which had helped to bring the local situation in the entire locust belt under control. Iran, he said, was very much interested in international cooperation and coordination in technical matters. As early as 1944 Iran entered into a locust convention with India which was later continued with Pakistan also. In particular, he thanked FAO for the effective role played in bringing about international cooperation and coordination in the field of locust control. He also very much appreciated the prompt action taken by FAO for procuring assistance from different sources and helping various countries in dealing with locust plagues during 1958. He also stressed the importance of field research on Desert Locust and stated that for any advancement in this research on Desert Locust, while discussing the programme of work and budget for the current year, the delegates should give special consideration to the field of research in the region.

Mr. Gurdas Singh, FAO Desert Locust Specialist, speaking on behalf of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, thanked the Government of Iran for their kind invitation to convene this session in Tehran and for the hospitality and various other facilities placed at the disposal of the FAO Secretariat. He explained the overall locust situation with particular reference to the south-west Asian region and stated that the assistance provided and concerted efforts made by the various national and regional organizations in the areas where the plague was concentrated during 1958/59 played a major role in bringing the plague to the present level. He was grateful to His Excellency for stressing the importance of surveys and considered it necessary that all the countries should maintain sustained vigilance in their respective Desert Locust areas by undertaking regular surveys. As regards research, he fully agreed with the delegates that the member governments would further intensify their field programmes at their field research stations.

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Mr. Gurdas Singh and Mr. B. S. Pruthi of the FAO Secretariat acted as Technical Secretaries.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SESSION

The following delegates from the Member Countries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, observers and members of the FAO staff participated in the Session and contributed to the discussions summarized in this report:

Delegates from FAO Member Countries

Afghanistan

Abdullah Faizyar
President
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Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
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Mehdi Sayii
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Plant Protection and Quarantine Organization
Ministry of Agriculture
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Hessamedin Abtahi
Chief, Survey and Plan Section
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Hayk Mirzayans
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Forecast

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Commission
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Election of the Drafting Committee
5. The Desert Locust Situation during 1969/70 and Forecast
6. A Review of the Desert Locust Survey and Control Activities carried out by the Member Countries during 1969/70 and Plans for Future
7. Consideration of the Report of the Executive Committee
8. Accounts for 1968 and 1969 and Programme of Work and Budget for 1970
9. Anti-Locust Survey and Control Potentials available in the Member Countries of the Commission
10. Special Surveys carried out in Southern Iran and South-West Afghanistan during 1969/70 and Plans for Future
11. Any Other Business
12. Date and Place of Next Session
13. Adoption of the Report

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Desert Locust Situation during 1969/70

1. The Commission received from the FAO Secretariat a summary of the Desert Locust situation in the countries of the region during 1969/70. This information was supplemented by the delegates.
2. In Afghanistan, on 6 and 7 May 1969 fifty Desert Locust adults were observed in Shorawak area, on 21 May one in Girishk area and on 23 May eleven in Farah area. The general body colour of the specimens collected was grey with slight yellow to fair yellow hind wings. No other locust activity was reported during the period under review.
3. In India no swarm movement or gregarious breeding was reported. One locust was observed in Churu district on 24 January, one in Barmer district on 26 February and one in Jaisalmer district on 2 April. There was no appreciable change in May and June and a maximum population of 60 per square kilometer was recorded in Barmer district on 28 May and 15 per square kilometer in Banaskartha district on 17 June. Isolated adults were reported from Bikaner, Jhunjhunu, Nagaur, Jalore, Churu and Jodhpur districts during July, the maximum population being 262 per square kilometer. Scattered adults were recorded from Sri-Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Barmer and Jaisalmer districts during August and the maximum population was 500 per square kilometer in Bikaner in the second fortnight. One green fifth instar hopper was collected from Barmer district on 26 August and five fourth and fifth instar hoppers from Bikaner district on 29 August. There was some rise of population in September when it touched 3,750 per square kilometer in Bikaner district. One fifth instar and some third instar solitary hoppers were also observed in Bikaner district. In October the maximum population was 600 per square kilometer in Barmer district during the first fortnight. A maximum population of 7,500 and 4,100 per square kilometer was recorded in Bikaner district during November and December, respectively. In the month of January 1970 there was a general decline in locust populations, the maximum being 375 per square kilometer observed in Bikaner. In February the population dropped to nil, whereas in March scattered locusts were observed in Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Nagaur districts.
4. In Iran only one locust was seen in Espakeh area in Sistan and Baluchistan province on 11 May, otherwise the country was reported free during the period under review.
5. In Pakistan one solitary locust was collected at Pasni on 18 April and another solitary female adult at Panjgur in the fourth week of June. According to an unconfirmed report, five grey locusts were seen in Bahawalpur district on 27 July. Four locusts were seen in Pasni area on 9 August and one solitary female was collected from Pasni reks on 16 August. A special survey of the Dasht and Kolwah Valleys of Mekran was arranged during February and March 1970. As a result, two isolated mature grey locusts were found near Nokbur on 14 February and two more in the Dasht Valley on 16 February. Six locusts were reported from the Kolwah Valley in the third week of February. During March one solitary hopper was observed in the Dasht Valley. During the same period no adult locusts were found in the Kulanch Valley but ten solitary green hoppers from first to fifth instar were collected, which were found near the cultivated fields.

Forecast

6. A small number of locust adults would occur in parts of Baluchistan of Pakistan and possibly in the adjoining areas of Iran. In view of the recent rainfall in Mekran (Pakistan), further laying on a small scale might occur. Summer breeding, both in India and Pakistan, was expected to be light.

Desert Locust Survey and Control during 1969/70 and Plans for the Future

7. The Member Countries of the Commission continued to maintain survey of Desert Locust populations in their respective areas. There were no significant populations which warranted control measures to be undertaken by the countries. The Commission noted that the various member governments would continue to keep their respective areas under constant watch and had adequate means to undertake control operations during the coming year, if required.

8. The Commission recommended that the member countries should continue to keep Desert Locust populations under strict vigilance in their respective potential breeding areas at the appropriate seasons. At the same time the need for controlling any significant populations likely to result in gregarization was emphasized. It was considered that such a policy of survey and control would help in prolonging the recession.

Report of the Executive Committee

9. The Commission considered the report of the Executive Committee (Appendix I) and endorsed the recommendations contained therein.

Administrative Budget and Accounts - FAO Trust Fund 123

Accounts to 31 December 1968

10. The Commission formally adopted the final statement of accounts (Appendix II) as at 31 December 1968, which had undergone no change since their submission to the Fifth Session as provisional accounts.

Accounts to 31 December 1969 and Outstanding Contributions

11. The Commission examined the provisional statement of accounts as at 31 December 1969 (Appendix III) together with the provisional statement of contributions from participating governments as at 31 December 1969 (Appendix IV) and noted that final accounts for the year 1969 would be presented to the Commission at its Seventh Session in the spring of 1971 for adoption and onward transmission to the Director-General.

12. The Commission was informed by the delegate of Pakistan that the outstanding contributions of his Government for 1969 had recently been paid.

Programme of Work and Budget for 1970

13. The Fifth Session of the Commission approved the programme of Work and Budget for the period of five years, 1970 to 1974. This Programme of Work and Budget was duly submitted to the FAO Finance Committee and subsequently to the FAO Council as required under Article IV of the Agreement. In view of the present calm locust situation, the Commission did not envisage any changes in the Budget approved at its Fifth Session, and the Programme of Work and Budget for 1970 was adopted accordingly.

14. The Commission agreed that if any additional funds were needed, particularly in respect of training as decided by the Fifth Session of the Executive Committee (Report, para. 15), such expenditure should be met from the unobligated cash balance of the Trust Fund.

15. The Commission emphasized the need for a full time Desert Locust officer in Afghanistan as soon as possible and requested FAO to explore the possibility of financing this post under a group country programme or from any other sources.

Survey and Control Potentials

16. The Commission reviewed the survey and control potentials available in the member countries and brought this information up to date (Appendix V).

17. The observer from the United States of America made the following statement:

"It has been very satisfactory to observe the progress of this Commission since its inauguration in 1964. The developing competence in research, training and survey has been very gratifying, and the work conducted by the member countries is an example of regional cooperation. The United States strongly supports the objectives of this Commission and anticipates it will continue its outstanding work".

Special Surveys

18. The Commission received from the FAO Secretariat an account of the special surveys undertaken in south-west Afghanistan and southern Iran during 1969. A summary of these surveys is given below:

South-West Afghanistan

19. The present joint Indo-Afghan survey of south-west Afghanistan was the fifth in the series. The Indian team arrived in Kabul on 16 April and proceeded to Kandahar on 22 April along with the Afghan team. The survey commenced from Kandahar and after its completion the team returned to Kandahar on 4 June and reached Kabul on 8 June. As recommended in the Report of the Fourth Special Reconnaissance Survey of South-West Afghanistan (No. UNDP(SF)DL/SS/11) more attention was devoted to the areas considered important as possible locust habitats, e.g. Shorawak, Char Reg area bordering Iran in the Herat Valley and Dasht-i-Margo west of the Helmand Valley canal system.

20. The current survey was of greater significance because of the upsurge of the Desert Locust during 1968 and the emphasis laid on special surveys by the FAO Desert Locust Control Committee at its Twelfth Session, held in Rome in October 1968.

21. Fifty Desert Locust adults were observed in Sheikhan Kalai (5 km. south-west south of Shorawak) on 6 and 7 May, one near Spin Masjid in the Helmand Valley on 21 May and eleven from Dasht-i-Shahidan (35 km. north-east of Farah) on 23 May. The general body colour of the specimens collected was grey and the hind wings were slight yellow to fair yellow. Soil moisture for oviposition was suitable in the Shorawak area only, whereas the other areas were dry. Shorawak area was again surveyed on 23 May but neither any hopper nor adult was observed.

22. It might be mentioned here that one Desert Locust adult was observed in 1965 and another in 1968 and none during the 1966 and 1967 special surveys, but sixty-two adults were observed during the present survey. The presence of a good number of scattered adults in 1969 suggested the possibility of individual migration from the adjoining areas and solitary breeding in areas which were either rain-fed or irrigated.

Southern Iran

23. The survey of southern Iran was also the fifth in the series. The Pakistan team, comprising two technical officers, two drivers and one maintenance assistant, arrived at Zahedan on 5 February. The two Iranian technical officers arrived at Zahedan on 6 February. The Iranian drivers and maintenance assistant, along with two jeep pickups, reached Zahedan on 9 February. The Plant Protection and Quarantine Organization of Iran detailed one more technical officer to accompany the survey. In addition, a technical officer from Zahedan along with his vehicle accompanied the party from 11 February to 1 March.

24. The party, accompanied by the Regional Locust Officer, left Zahedan on 11 February and visited Iranshahr, Chahbahar, Djiroft, Bandar Abbas, Minab, Jask, Bandar Lengeh, Gavhandi, Bushehr, Benaveh, Ahwaz and Esfahan areas up to 20 March and dispersed from Esfahan. The Pakistan team left Esfahan on 23 March for Zahedan from where they proceeded to Pakistan on 27 March. Mr. S.S. Pruthi returned to Teheran on 28 March.

25. No locust was observed during the survey. The areas visited had received exceptionally good rainfall during the current year and conditions in general were very suitable for breeding all over. Meteorological observations regarding temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction in the areas surveyed were made three times a day.

26. Mr. S.S. Pruthi was the coordinator of both special surveys.

Special Survey Programme for 1970

27. The Commission noted with satisfaction that arrangements for the special survey of south-western Afghanistan had been made and the joint Iranian-Pakistan survey of southern Iran was already in progress. Recognizing the importance of these surveys, the Commission agreed to institute such surveys in 1971 with its own funds as the UNDP(SF) Assisted Desert Locust Project was due to terminate in June 1970.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

28. The Commission noted with appreciation the invitation extended by the delegate of India for holding the next session of the Executive Committee and of the Commission in New Delhi, on a date to be decided by the Director-General of FAO in consultation with the Government of India.