

March 2009

E



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## FAO DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

### Thirty-ninth Session

Rome, 10-13 March 2009

**The operations arm of EMPRES: The FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation division's Food Chain Emergencies Management Unit (TCE-FCEMU)**  
(Agenda Item 12)

### Background

During previous Desert Locust emergency control campaigns, an ad-hoc structure called the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLO) was established by the Director General with the aim of strengthening FAO's emergency response. During the 1986-89 plague, ECLO was overseen by the AGP Director while in the 2003-05 upsurge, the Directors of AGP and the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) managed it jointly. During the upsurge, ECLO included all AGP staff directly involved in operations against locusts and other migratory pests (mainly from the Locust Group), supported by operational staff from TCE. Additional staff were recruited for, or assigned to, ECLO as necessary.

Although ECLO succeeded in its task to respond to the past Desert Locust campaign, the Multilateral Evaluation of the Desert Locust campaign carried out in 2005-06 identified several constraints, specifically:

- the dual line of command hindered the smooth implementation of ECLO's operations. This was also highlighted by the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (see below).
- the lack of a well-defined strategy hampered the emergency response, which resulted in spending substantial resources to prepare more than 60 different project documents tailored to the needs of the various donors.

The recent Independent External Evaluation (IEE) found that “FAO's strength in plant pest and animal disease management has been that it can provide a joined-up global response, linking global monitoring, international legislative instruments and fora for discussion, resource mobilization and coordination with disease and pest management. There is room for improvement, particularly in bringing in economic management and attention to livelihoods, but FAO has an absolute comparative advantage [...]” (Page 105, para 384).

Drawing on the lessons learnt from ECLO and ECTAD (Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases), FAO has decided to streamline its emergency prevention and management framework for food-chain crisis (transboundary animal diseases, plant pests and diseases and food safety emergencies) in order to be more proactive and improve the means of effectively addressing large-scale emergencies emanating from transboundary animal diseases, plant pests and diseases and other threats to the food chain and in meeting countries' calls for assistance and guidance.

### **The CMC-FC framework**

As a first step, FAO is integrating its information, communication, intelligence, risk analysis, early warning and alert functions within a unified framework, known as the Crisis Management Centre for the Food Chain (CMC-FC).

The CMC-FC is FAO's primary instrument to take action in support of member countries and to ensure institutional collaboration in the global governance of threats to the human food chain at all stages, from production to consumption. Such action and collaboration focuses on the response to potential or verified substantial emergencies, threatening the food chain and on necessary steps for rehabilitation. The CMC-FC facilitates horizon-scanning to improve forecasting, preparedness and prevention of such emergencies; the CMC-FC also undertakes and promotes risk communication. The new CMC-FC gradually being established is composed of three main elements:

- (1) **Intelligence and coordination element.** An intelligence and Coordination Unit (ICU) has been set up to:
  - focus on risk analysis, intelligence and advocacy for FAO's emergency prevention activities along the food chain
  - provide enhanced knowledge and longer-term forecasting of threats
  - assume a strategic role to increase coordination and synergy between the different EMPRES components, as well as at intra- and inter-institutional levels
- (2) **Emergency prevention and early warning element.** This element is provided by EMPRES and its specialized units at headquarters and in decentralized offices for animal diseases (AGA), plant pests and diseases, including Desert Locust (AGP), and food safety (AGN).
- (3) **Response element.** Building on the existing structure and within the new crisis management framework for the food chain (CMC-FC), a Food Chain Emergency Management Unit has been established in October 2008 within the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE-FCEMU). The TCE-FCEMU is the operational arm of the CMC-FC. It provides the core operational capacity for the short-, medium- and longer-term response to emergencies, which threaten the food chain (animal diseases, plant pests and food safety) and for the related medium-term rehabilitation.

### **The Food Chain Emergency Management Unit in TCE**

The TCE-FCEMU manages the rapid response, as well as the emergency and rehabilitation field response programmes and is composed of four groups working in close interaction with the field:

- the **Rapid Response Unit** (acting as the "Fire brigade", with capacity to deploy a specialized team within 72 hours)
- the **Programming Unit** with responsibility for programming, formulation support, project document quality check, reporting and donor/UN liaison
- the **Common Services and Monitoring Unit** with responsibility for procurement support, logistics, ICT, financial control and monitoring
- the **Field Programme Unit** with responsibility for field programme operations (geographic desks and decentralized structures, including Emergency Coordination Units).

The TCE-FCEMU involves both technical and operations officers working under the overall programme supervision and responsibility of the relevant technical services because of the complexity of these emergencies, including the transboundary dimension of the threat to countries' food security and the related international and inter-institutional structures.

On the operations side, the TCE-FCEMU is composed of a core group of operations officers, as well as programming, finance, logistics, procurement and ICT specialists fully dedicated to food chain related emergencies. While a number of Incident Command System (ICS) principles are already utilized in FAO's current emergency work, the Rapid Response Unit with support from the United States Department of Agriculture is working at further mainstreaming these principles in the context of its response activities. Significant progress has been made in integrating concepts on most of the core principles including: adopting a modular organization, unity of command, manageable spans of command, having designated incident facilities, adopting documentation practices in line with ICS and participated in structured ICS training courses.

The structure described above is already operational for the Red Locust emergency response in Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi.

Building on the recommendations from previous evaluations and especially from the multilateral evaluation of the 2003-2005 Desert Locust evaluation, a number of important steps have already been taken:

- Global programme documents are now systematically prepared for all major food chain emergencies. These programmes attempt to present the needs in a multidisciplinary manner and promote results based management. For example, recently a Wheat Rust disease Global Programme was formulated and shared with donors, while a Cassava disease Global Programme is under preparation. Building on the experience gained, it is envisaged to prepare a Desert Locust emergency programme for the western, central and eastern regions of Africa. Such a programme document would be regularly updated depending on the evolution of the situation on the ground. Once finalized, these documents greatly facilitate forceful advocacy and permit a flexible approach to donors' requirements by serving as a modular basis for the easy preparation of project documents in case of earmarked contributions, or as a reference document in case of unearmarked funding and could be instrumental for eventual submission to donors for funding in case a Desert Locust emergency develops. The emergency programme could also include buffer stocks of main inputs (such as pesticides, sprayers and radios) stored in strategically located warehouses from where they could be shipped rapidly whenever necessary.
- The Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) which was established following the approval of FAO's 102<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Finance Committee in May 2003, foresees, among others, a component to advance funds to projects that have been agreed by donors (working capital component) and another one to support work on specific large emergency programmes (programme component). This programme component offers ample opportunity to donors to contribute to major thematic programmes. In relation to the launch of the Wheat Rust diseases Global Programme, donors have been encouraged to pledge contributions in support of a specific Plant Pests SFERA window, which could also be used.
- With the aim of being prepared for and proactive in the fight against Desert Locust, the TCE-FCEMU has initiated various processes for the launch of advanced market researches for the main inputs required during a Desert Locust emergency, including various types of sprayers, HF and VHF radios, camping kits, survey kits, etc.

## **Conclusion**

The ECLO experience has been critical for identifying shortcomings of the Desert Locust emergency operations and finding remedial actions, which have been incorporated in the new framework for food chain emergencies. This framework draws from previous experiences and joins the technical capacity of FAO's technical divisions with the operational capacity of TCE (TCE-FCEMU) under a single line of command. The TCE-FCEMU promotes a programme approach, uses innovative funding tools such as SFERA and has already started advanced market research in order to be proactive rather than reactive regarding eventual Desert Locust campaigns.