



NSPMD

Locusts and other transboundary plant pests and diseases

Locusts and other transboundary plant pests and diseases are of significant impact on food security, trade and the economies of many of countries throughout the world. Since they can easily spread to other countries and reach epidemic proportions, their management and control require regional and international coordination and cooperation.

The Team

The *Locusts and other transboundary plant pests and diseases* Team has been working for several decades on locusts with staff at FAO-HQ and within three regional commissions for controlling the Desert Locust. [CLCPRO](#) in north-west and western Africa, [CRC](#) in the Near-East and [SWAC](#) in south-west Asia. The experience gained in managing locust issues such as the development and implementation of the preventive control strategy and the Desert Locust global monitoring, information and early warning system, both part of the Strategic Programme 5, was extended to other transboundary plant pests and diseases. The actual composition of the Team reflects its work with six officers and two general service staff (GS). Unfortunately, there are also two frozen posts although they are key for the team, one locust officer and one GS.

EMPRES-Plant Protection

The Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases ([EMPRES](#)) was established in 1994 with the goal of enhancing world food security and fighting transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases, in particular Desert Locust and Rinderpest.

Through FAO's Strategic Programme 5 "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises" and within the [Food Chain Crisis Management Framework](#) (FCC), the core principles of the EMPRES Programme are:

- monitoring and early warning,
- early reaction,
- contingency planning, and
- promotion of environmentally sound control technologies.

EMPRES works in close collaboration with affected countries, national and international agricultural research centers, and other international institutions and partners.

The plant health component of the EMPRES Programme has been focusing primarily on the Desert Locust, which has the ability to form large swarms migrating over long distances, threatening crops and affecting food security. NSPMD and the three FAO Desert Locust Commissions promotes prevention strategies and strengthens the management capacities of more than thirty Desert Locust affected countries in Africa, the Near East, and South-West Asia.

NSPMD works closely with the three FAO Desert Locust commissions (CLCPRO, CRC and SWAC) and in the framework of the EMPRES Programme. In addition, [FAO's Desert Locust Information Service](#) (DLIS) at HQ monitors locust populations and environmental conditions on a daily basis and provides early warning to member countries through monthly bulletins, forecasts, updates and alerts using the latest technology.

The EMPRES Programme has been extended to other [locust pests in Caucasus and Central Asia](#) (CCA). A "Programme to improve national and regional locust management in CCA" is underway in 10 countries to promote



the preventive locust control strategy, thus early warning and reaction, by updating and harmonizing knowledge and practices related to locust survey and control and reducing the risks associated with pesticide use. It also aims at developing regional cooperation between the concerned countries, which appears as necessary for sustainable transboundary pest management.

The EMPRES-Programme also includes assistance and response to locust emergencies when they occur and upon specific request of concerned countries. Currently, the team is deeply involved in a [Three-year Programme in response to the locust plague in Madagascar](#) (2013/16). After the successful implementation of the two first campaigns, which have allowed halting the Migratory Locust plague and accompanying its decline while protecting crops and pastures, a locust recession situation should be reached at completion of the third and last campaign, in June 2016. Biopesticides were operationally used and a specialized team monitored staff involved in pesticide management as well as spraying operations.

As new or re-emerging migratory plant pests have raised concerns about their potential impact on livelihoods, food security and global markets, EMPRES-Plant Protection also addresses other transboundary plant pests and diseases, adopting the successful Desert Locust management model to mitigate them. For example, NSPMD is supporting the Global Wheat Rust Monitoring System run by the [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center](#) (CIMMYT) to monitor and combat the wheat rust disease threats including the yellow rust and Ug99 stem rust race and its variants in East Africa, Middle East and Asia. NSPMD is also helping countries to prevent and respond to other transboundary plant pest and disease emergencies. These include the Banana, Cassava Mosaic and Maize diseases which continue to affect key food security crops in Africa as well as the Coffee Leaf Rust disease in Central America and Caribbean.

EMPRES Plant Protection contribution to Sustainable Crop Production Intensification (SCPI)

Efforts to increase agricultural production must also include strategies to limit crop losses. NSPMD helps countries in developing and putting in place all possible mechanisms to mitigate the potential impact of transboundary plant pests and diseases on food security and nutrition, operating early warning and adopting environmentally sound pest control systems. Furthermore, the team collaborates with governments to adopt preventive control strategies to ensure sustainable management of transboundary plant pests and diseases at the national, regional and international levels.

In conclusion, NSPMD contributes both to the FAO Strategic Programme 5 “Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises” and to Strategic Programme 2 “Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner”.