

# DESERT LOCUST THREAT IN WEST AFRICA

1. current situation
2. threat to agriculture
3. call to action



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1. West Africa faces a Desert Locust threat this – the most serious since the last plague in 2003–05
2. In the next few minutes, I would like to: inform you about the situation and what action to take to manage it

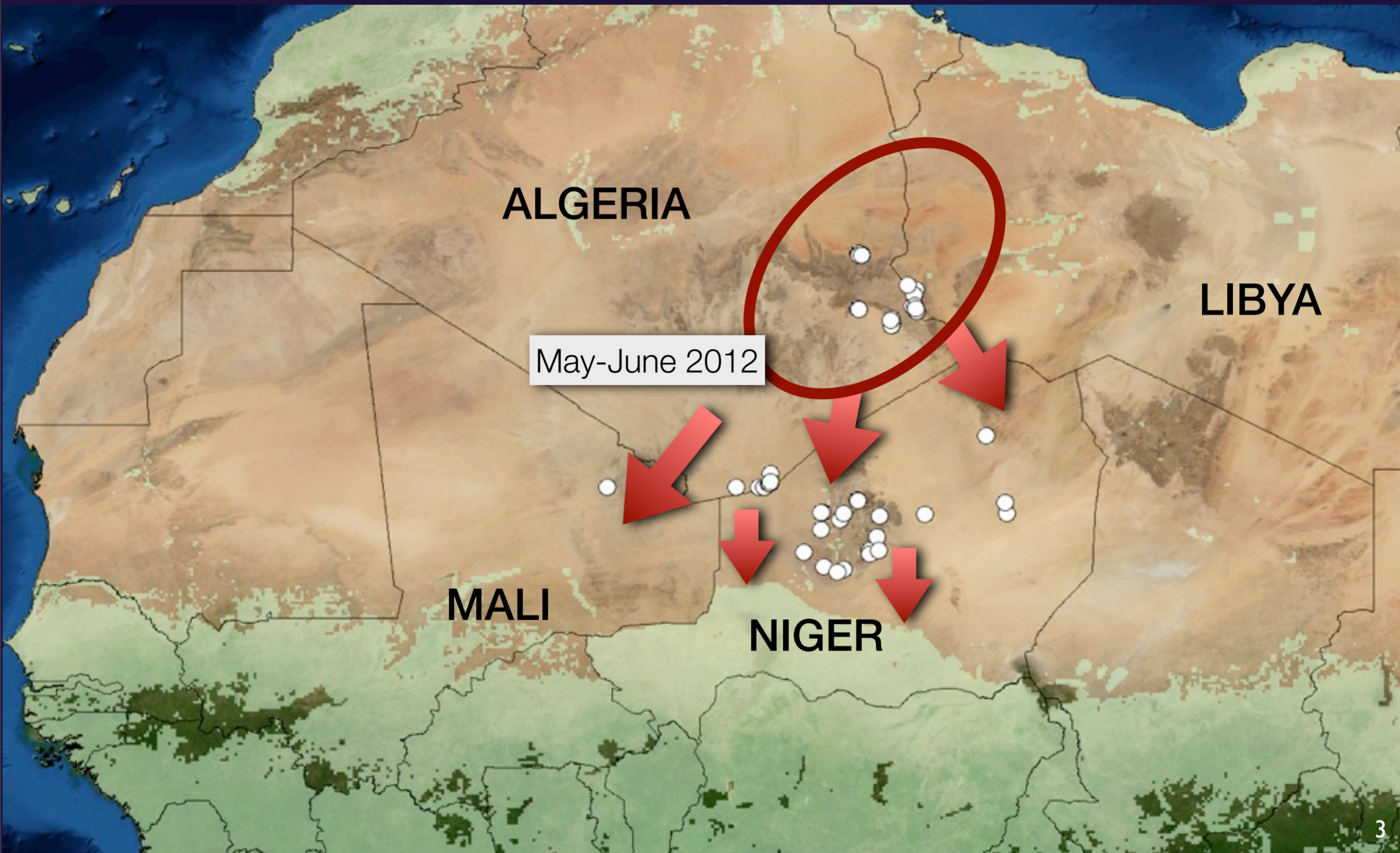
# CURRENT LOCUST SITUATION



2

1. Desert Locust lives in the deserts of Africa and SW Asia. They need good rains to reproduce and increase in number.
2. This is exactly what occurred along both sides Algerian/Libyan border.
3. Good rains fell late last year and locusts have been breeding and increasing during the past six months.
4. Normally Algeria and Libya are able to control the locusts, stop swarms from forming and prevent their movement south to the Sahel in W Africa
5. Insecurity this year does not allow full access to infested areas by ground teams (Algeria estimated they could reach only 15% of potentially infested areas).
6. Libyan capacity to carry out control efforts has been affected in the past year.
7. Although both countries carried out control operations, they could not prevent swarms from forming in May.

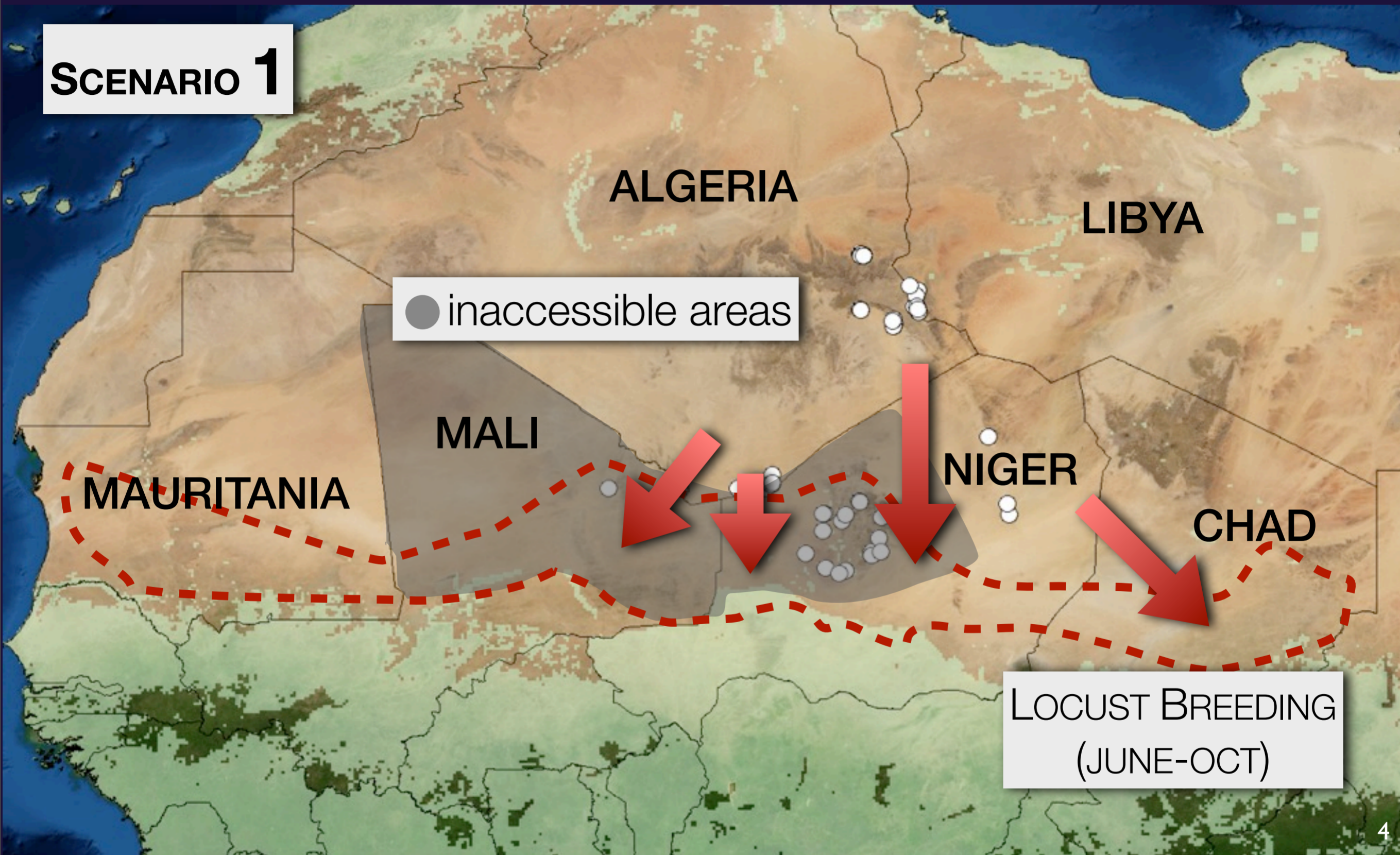
# CURRENT LOCUST SITUATION



1. The Desert Locust has been around for thousands of years; one of the reasons for this is that when conditions are not favourable for survival or breeding, they have the ability to migrate to better places.
2. This is exactly what they started to do in May after they formed swarms.
3. The timing coincided with early rains in the N Sahel – about 6 weeks earlier than usual.
4. These rains are good for the farmers, but also for the locusts.
5. The first locusts arrived in N Mali (27 May) and N Niger (30 May).
6. This was not surprising nor unexpected because FAO operates an early warning system to keep countries informed of the Desert Locust situation.
7. Within this system, FAO monitors field conditions on a daily basis based on data collected by national locust teams and uses satellites to know where it rained and where there is green vegetation in the desert.
8. In this way, FAO can predict what will happen and provide early warning to countries so that they can respond in time.
9. In late March, FAO warned countries that locusts are likely to start moving from the Algerian-Libyan border to the N Sahel by early June. So countries had two months of advanced warning.

# UNCONTROLLED BREEDING - INACCESSIBLE AREAS

## SCENARIO 1

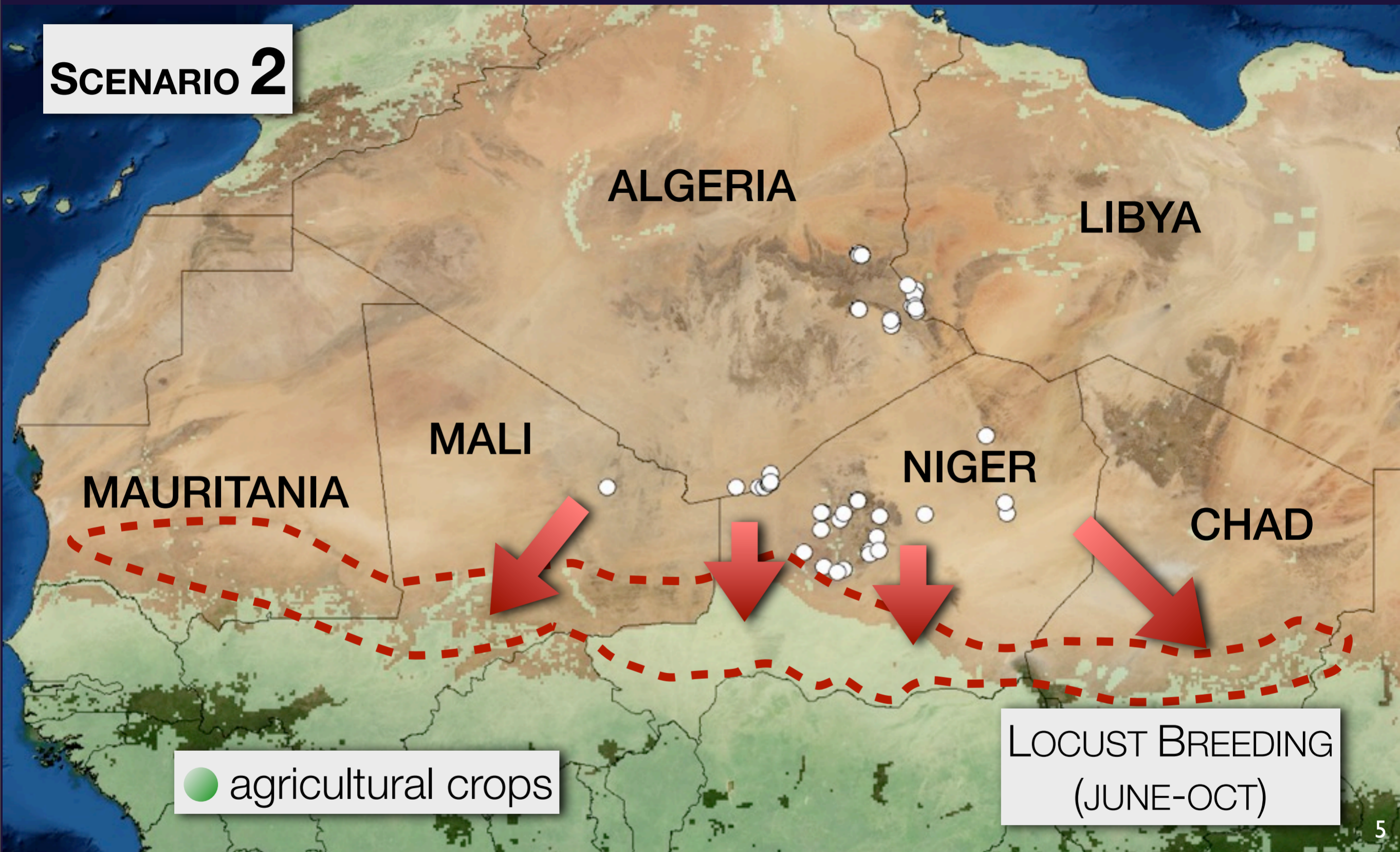


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1. In the past two weeks, locust swarms continue to arrive in N Niger and probably N Mali (but information is scanty).
2. The question now is what will happen during this summer. There are two possibilities.
3. Scenario 1: the incoming locusts will remain in the N Sahel in areas where it rained, quickly mature and lay eggs.
4. This is good because the main cropping areas further south would not be so affected.
5. This is bad because most of this area is inaccessible so infestations are likely not to be detected and controlled.
6. In Niger, access is limited in the N and teams must be accompanied by military escorts.
7. Mali is particularly challenging in terms of information, operations and resources in the north.
8. If infestations are not controlled, there could be up to 250 times the number of Desert Locust at end of summer.

# PASTURES & CROPS AT RISK

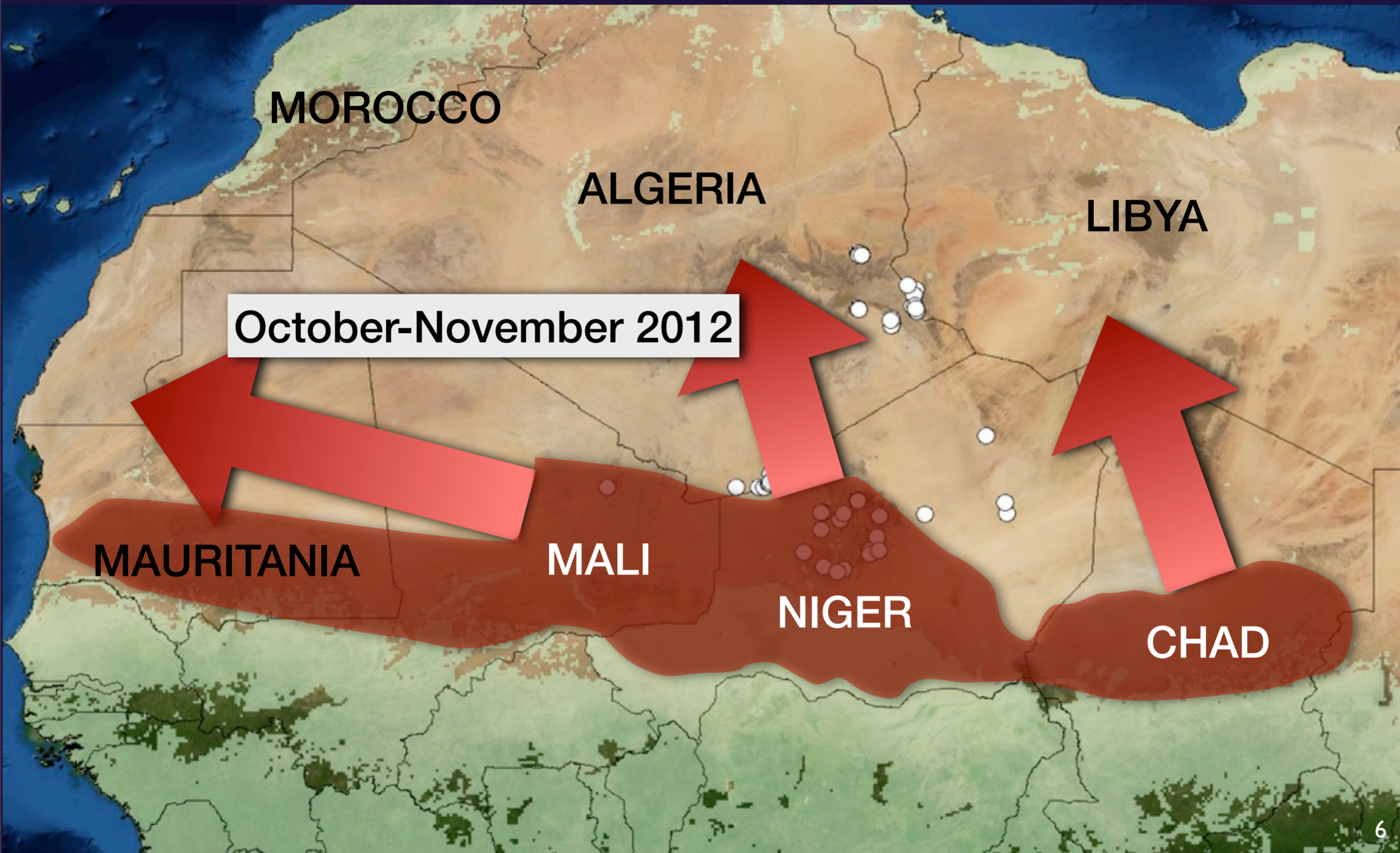
## SCENARIO 2



5

1. Scenario 2: the incoming adults and swarms fly over those N areas that are still dry and continue S to agriculture zones in central and south Niger, central Mali and perhaps central Chad.
2. This is good because they leave areas in which survey and control operations are not possible or very limited, and go to areas where teams can operate.
3. This is bad because they would arrive in agricultural areas at the same time when this year's crop is being planted and emerging.
4. We are all aware of the vulnerable and extremely precarious situation this year in terms of food security in both countries.

# POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES



6

1. In reality, probably a little bit of both scenarios will occur.
2. Consequently, there is a high risk that Desert Locust populations will increase dramatically this summer, especially if rains are good and many areas are inaccessible.
3. By the end of the summer (October), large numbers of locusts, including swarms, could be present.
4. As ecological conditions dry out, the Desert Locusts are expected to move to NW Mauritania, Algeria, Libya and perhaps Morocco.
5. There are constraints (insecurity) this year, so countries must be prepared for this.



# CALL TO ACTION **NOW**

Activate Contingency Plans:

**Niger:** *Plan de gestion du Risque Acridien*

**Mali:** *Cadre de gestion du Risque Acridien*

**Chad:** *Plan de gestion du Risque Acridien*

**Mauritania:** *Plan de gestion du Risque Acridien*

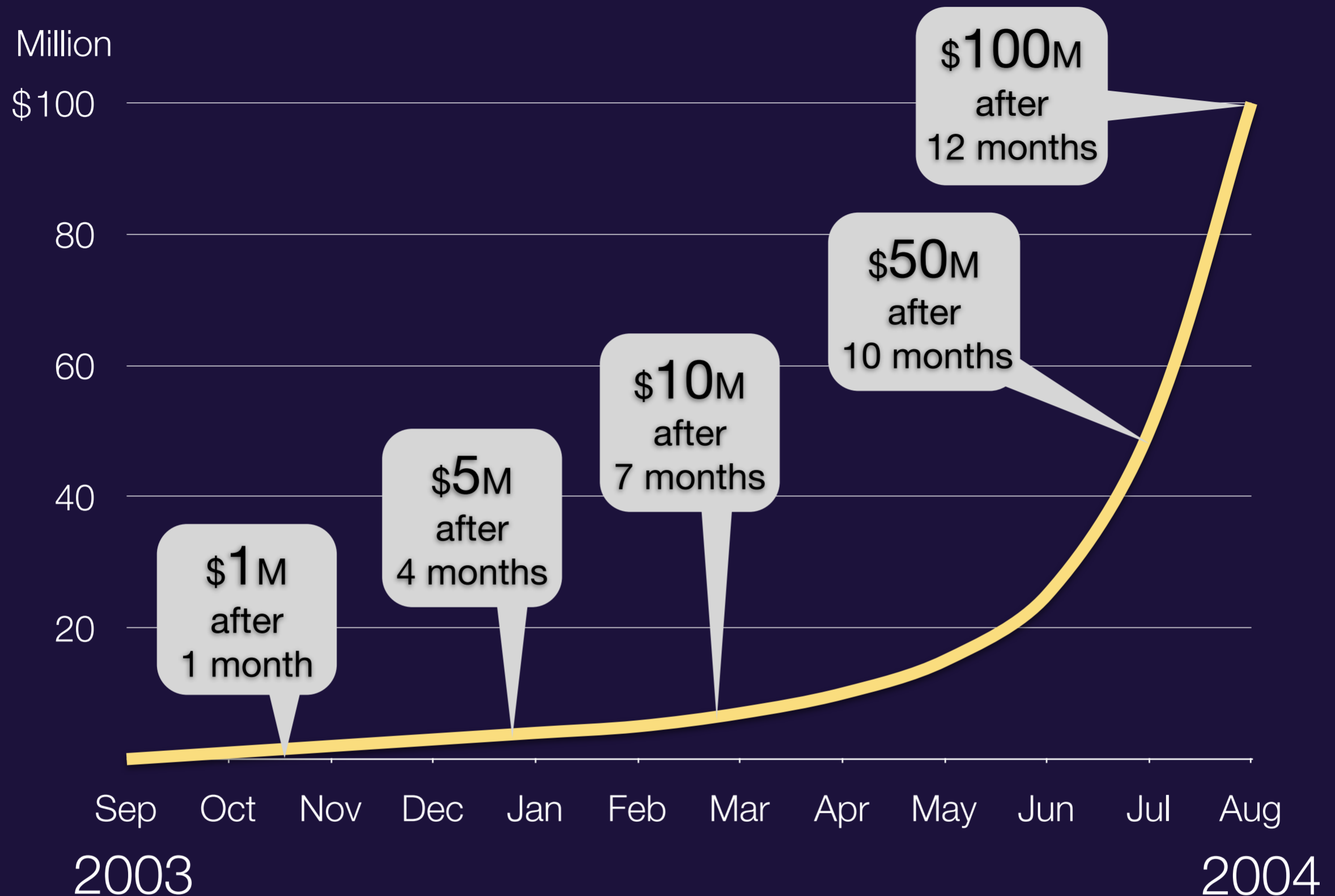
Mobilize field teams in Niger & Mali

Start regular surveys in Mauritania & Chad

Initiate public awareness campaigns

1. Affected countries must put existing resources into action now. There are four specific actions to take.
2. Activate contingency mechanisms and action plans (developed under regional coordination of FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region) in each country.
3. Activate and mobilize survey and control teams in Niger and Mali to undertake operations wherever possible in locust infested areas.
4. Start regular surveys in Mauritania and Chad in order to detect any incoming adults and swarms.
5. Initiate a public awareness campaign in each country so that locals are informed and, when they see locusts, they know who to contact.
6. Countries must make the most effective use of existing resources.

# \$1 MILLION SAVES \$100 MILLION



1. FAO and affected countries have learned important lessons from the last plague in the Region.
2. Experience has shown that the earlier everybody can respond, the better.
3. This protects crops, protects the environment (using less pesticide), contributes to food security, and saves money.
4. In the last plague: if \$1m would have been available shortly after the emergency started, then maybe we could have avoided the plague for next 2 years.
5. It is important to understand how quickly financial requirements can escalate, going from \$1 million to \$100 million in one year.
6. Clearly the current situation faced is not in the same situation as in 2003–05; but it could be in the early stages of the beginning.
7. So all efforts must be put into action now to avoid further deterioration in the situation and an escalation of potential risk and costs.
8. Whatever can be done now will protect crops and reduce the size of an eventual spread to other countries.



# LATEST INFORMATION

[www.fao.org/ag/locusts](http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts)

[www.facebook.com/faolocust](https://www.facebook.com/faolocust)

[twitter.com/faolocust](https://twitter.com/faolocust)

1. Affected Countries must mobilize their resources now.
2. FAO will keep countries informed of the situation as it evolves.
3. Everyone must be prepared to face a situation that can worsen by the end of the summer.