



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(21 February 2004)



General Situation as of 20 February 2004

More swarms are forming in Mauritania and, on a smaller scale, in Western Sahara and Niger. Another generation of breeding is in progress on the Red Sea coast in Saudi Arabia where swarms are forming and some adult groups have moved into the interior. A few hopper groups and bands are present on the Red Sea coastal plains near the Egyptian/Sudanese border. Overall, the situation remains extremely critical. Although control operations continue in all affected countries, swarms are expected to move into the spring breeding areas in Northwest Africa and in the Arabian Peninsula.

There is a severe shortage of pesticide in **Mauritania** where new swarms continue to form in the northwest and late instar hopper bands are maturing. Some swarms were seen moving northwards. Widespread hatching is in progress in the north where mainly late instar hopper bands are already present. More than 24,000 ha were treated (and another 11,500 ha using barriers) by 8 Mauritanian, 4 Mauritanian/Algerian, and 2 Mauritanian/Moroccan teams during 1-10 February. In **Western Sahara**, a few swarms started to form in early February, and groups of late instar hoppers and adults are present from the Mauritanian border to Laayoune. Ground and aerial teams treated 13,048 ha on 1-10 February. In **Algeria**, 200 ha of adult groups were treated near Tindouf during the same period. In **Niger**, hopper and adult groups continue to mature in the southeastern Air Mountains where swarm formation

has commenced. Control operations treated 758 ha on 5-11 February. More laying is likely in northern Mauritania and in Niger. Additional swarms can be expected to form in the coming weeks in Mauritania, Western Sahara and, to a lesser extent, Niger. Some of these may move north towards the spring breeding area along the southern side of the Atlas Mountains in **Morocco** and Algeria.

In **Sudan**, adults are forming groups in the Tokar Delta where ground control operations treated 210 ha so far in February. Control was also carried out against 88 ha of late instar hopper groups on the northern Red Sea coast. Fledgling has occurred in nearby areas and adult groups were forming. In **Egypt**, 300 ha of small hopper bands were treated at three places on the Red Sea coastal plains near the Sudanese border during the first week of February. Only isolated adults were found during a joint survey on the coastal plains of northwestern **Somalia** and adjacent areas of **Djibouti**.

In **Saudi Arabia**, a few swarms were seen laying eggs on the Red Sea coast north of Jeddah where a second generation of breeding has started and hatchlings, first and second instar bands are present. Late instar bands continue to fledge and form adult groups on the plains. Some mature adults and groups moved into the interior at mid-month between Medinah and Buraydah where they are starting to breed. Ground and aerial teams treated nearly 19,000 ha on 1-18 February. More groups and swarms will form and some of these will move into the interior and lay eggs. There remains a low risk that a few could continue to western **Iran**.

The FAO Desert Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by fax, e-mail, FAO pouch and airmail by the Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, AGP Division, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is also available on the Internet.

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The most up-to-date information on the situation and photos are available on the Internet (www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm) as well as maps of the latest infestations (193.43.36.11/mapper).