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**Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES)
for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases
(Desert Locust Component)**

**Report of the 2nd Meeting of
EMPRES Liaison Officers**

FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, 28-30 Aug. 1995

INTRODUCTION

The 2nd meeting of the EMPRES liaison officers was hosted by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East in Cairo, Egypt. The following persons participated:

EMPRES Liaison Officers

Mr. A.A. Abdalla (Sudan)
Mr. A. Abdulahi (Ethiopia)
Mr. A.S.A. Al-Abry (Oman)
Mr. J.M. Al-Shehri (Saudi Arabia)
Mr. H.E. Amir (Djibouti)
Mr. F.M. Bahakim (Yemen)
Mr. A.H. Karrar (DLCO-EA)
Mr. M. S. Simary (Egypt)
Mr. M. Tesfayohannes (Eritrea)

Observers

Mr. G. Hanrieder (GTZ, Sudan)
Mr. C. Prior (IIBC, U.K.)

FAO Staff

Mr. N.A. van der Graaff (Chief, Plant Protection Service, AGPP)
Mr. A. Hafraoui (Senior Officer, Migratory Pest Group, AGPP)

Mr. M. Taher (Secretary, Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust
in the Near East, RNEA)

Mr. C. Mushi (UN Volunteer, FAO Somalia)

FAO Consultant

Mr. S. El-Bashir

Mr. B. Zelazny

The Meeting reviewed the current status of implementation of the FAO EMPRES pilot projects and adopted a work programme for the rest of 1995. Other topics discussed included collaboration with other organizations and projects (representatives from the GTZ Locust Project and the IIBC/IITA/DFPV Locust and Grasshopper Biological Control Programme attended the meeting as observers) as well as preparations for the full donor-assisted EMPRES programme. The adopted agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex I.

The Meeting concluded the following:

- All locust affected countries share the collective responsibility to control the Desert Locust. It is necessary for each country to develop a basic minimum capacity for Desert Locust survey and control operations which needs to be maintained during recession periods. Collaboration between affected countries is also a basic requirement for successful locust control.
- Locust affected countries, according to size and economic situation, at times share resources assigned to Desert Locust with survey and control operations against other pest problems. However, there is a need to dedicate certain resources exclusively to Desert Locust operations.
- While refresher training is often necessary for workers involved in locust survey and control operations, there is a need to coordinate training activities better in order to cover specific training requirements in priority areas.
- The GTZ project in the Sudan has made important progress, particularly in the areas of training, the development of more efficient and environmentally friendly control methods as well as the safe handling of pesticides.

The Meeting further noted the following:

- The DLCO-EA council of ministers was briefed during its 40th Session (July 1995, in Addis Ababa) on the EMPRES programme including on the collaboration between EMPRES and DLCO-EA. The council endorsed the EMPRES programme.

- All Liaison Officers indicated that their terms of references have been accepted by their Governments, but that not all countries have yet informed FAO of this in writing.
- The issue of stocks of obsolete pesticides is still an unsolved problem and is a topic of major concern to the countries participating in the EMPRES programme.

The general recommendations of the Meeting were:

- To adopt Mr. S. El-Bashir's consultancy report and recommendations after incorporating specific modifications proposed by the meeting participants.
- To develop collaborative agreements between FAO and countries as well as regional organizations participating in the EMPRES programme.
- To implement the work plan adopted by the meeting which is attached as Annex II.
- While direct contact between FAO Headquarters and the EMPRES Liaison Officers is desirable for many issues related to the operations of the programme, communications on matters outside the competence of the Liaison Officers (e.g. invitations to attend meetings) should be passed through the official channels. Each country will provide its requirements to the FAO Secretariat.
- The training requirements developed by the Near East Commission should be distributed to those countries which are not members of the Commission in order to help them define their own training requirements at the national, regional and international level.

EARLY WARNING PILOT PROJECT

The meeting reviewed current EMPRES activities and previous recommendations related to the Early Warning Pilot Project and concluded that:

- aerial surveys can provide valuable information to ground teams on the extent of vegetation cover in critical breeding areas and assist in the location of swarms;
- there are different systems practised on how survey and control teams interact and that there is a need to further review and discuss these interactions;

The meeting agreed specifically to:

- endorse the report of the FAO communication consultant and to establish as soon as possible the proposed communication network (visits by the consultant to Oman, Saudi Arabia and Yemen were recommended);
- adopt a modified programme for a workshop on survey methods to be held in Oman from 9 to 13 December 1995.

EARLY REACTION PILOT PROJECT

During discussions on the status of implementation of the Early Reaction Pilot project the meeting concluded that:

- in several countries, national workshops are needed to review organizational arrangements which take effect once Desert Locust emergencies develop;
- it is important to analyze and evaluate data and information related to past Desert Locust campaigns in order to arrive at a better understanding of how campaigns have been executed, how locust populations have developed, and finally how the campaigns have contained and reduced the pest populations. The evaluations could then lead to improvements in campaign organization and execution.

In relation to the Early Reaction Pilot project the meeting recommended to:

- develop as soon as possible a contingency plan in key affected countries for the next winter breeding season;
- assist in the development of contingency arrangements in all countries participating in the EMPRES programme; among others, these arrangements would clearly define the task of government agencies and units outside the Locust Control Service and the Plant Protection Department in case of emergencies;
- provide participating countries with the (unpublished) FAO evaluation report for the 1986-89 plague, and develop a suitable procedure through which countries, with some assistance, would modify this report and would prepare a similar evaluation for campaigns during the 1992 - 1995 upsurge.

DESERT LOCUST RESEARCH

The Meeting discussed research aspects of the EMPRES programme and concluded that:

- studies on the economic significance of the Desert Locust are necessary, but will be difficult and are likely to lead only to approximate results;
- ongoing research on mycopesticides is of interest in relation to attempts to develop safe and environmentally acceptable locust control methods; the promise of this method lies initially mainly in the early control of small and medium scale infestations.

The Meeting recommended that:

- FAO should pursue discussions with experts on the appropriate methodology for economic studies and should, as a subsequent step, contact affected countries about possible collaborations;
- the EMPRES programme should consider proposals for collaboration in field trials with mycopesticides and with chitin-synthesis inhibitors;
- trials with chitin-synthesis inhibitors should be designed to lead to registration in the affected countries.

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FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, 28-30 Aug. 1995**

Agenda

Opening

Adoption of Agenda

Adoption of report of 1st meeting of EMPRES Liaison Officers

Status of Early Warning Pilot Project

- Overview and recommendations by EMPRES consultant (S. El Bashir)
- Establishment of communication network (consultancy by M. Marcella)
- Workshop on survey methods
- Other recommendations resulting from previous meeting
- Statements by countries

Status of Early Reaction Pilot Project

- Overview and recommendations by EMPRES consultant (S. El Bashir)
- Planned consultancy on contingency planning
- Other recommendations resulting from previous meeting
- Statements by countries

Status of Research Pilot Project

- Economic studies
- Microbial control
- IGR trials
- Status of remote sensing project

Collaboration

- Regional collaboration
- GTZ assistance to locust control in the Sudan
- Status of collaboration with other organizations

Organizational and administrative matters

- Establishment of EMPRES liaison offices
- Terms of reference for liaison officers
- Finalization of section for full donor-assisted programme: "Inputs by Participating Governments"

Finalization of work plan and recommendations

Other matters

Next meeting

EMPRES Workplan for the Central Region**September - December 1995****1. GENERAL MATTERS**

- 1.1 Recruitment of national/regional experts
- 1.2 Establish efficient liaison offices
- 1.3 Develop collaborative agreements between FAO and participating countries/DLCO-EA¹
- 1.4 Assist in defining and strengthening training activities

2. Early Warning Pilot Project

- 2.1 Establish an information exchange network
- 2.2 Organize workshop on survey operations
- 2.3 Standardize electronic storage/transmission of survey data based on FAO form²
- 2.4 Supply of information on rainfall, vegetation and wind directions to locust control services
- 2.5 GPS training³
- 2.6 Restructuring survey operations (sustainable units)
- 2.7 Provision of equipment/supplies to strengthen survey operations
- 2.8 Pursue discussions on joint border surveys
- 2.9 Analyze scout system

3. Early Reaction Pilot Project

- 3.1 Develop contingency plans/arrangements⁴
- 3.2 National workshops on improving contingency planning and arrangements

- 3.3 Implement monitoring of efficacy of control operations⁵
- 3.4 Monitoring of safety and environmental impact⁶
- 3.5 Equipment to strengthen early control operations
- 3.6 Evaluate previous campaigns in selected countries
- 3.7 Develop guidelines for the use of pesticides donated for locust control but needed for other pests.

4. Research Pilot Project

- 4.1 Review the availability of data and reports in affected countries related to economic studies, discussion with experts on methodology of economic studies.
- 4.2 Initiate economic studies
- 4.3 Microbial control trials⁷
- 4.4 IGR trials⁷

Annotations:

There was a general agreement on the proposed work programme. The following issues were noted:

- ¹ Re: 1.3
The FAO legal office will be consulted on such an agreement. The countries will indicate to Prof. El-Bashir what requirements they see for such an agreement. A draft will be discussed in the next meeting. The agreement may have the nature of a memorandum of understanding.
- ² Re: 2.3
FAO HQ will provide to RNE specifications for a software programme for transmitting survey results through the e-mail. RNE will initiate the development of such a programme.
- ³ Re: 2.5
The training video on the use of GPS would be ready before the end of the year (Resp: - FAO/HQ).

- 4 Re: 3.1
Guidelines to be developed on contingency planning. Short term contingency planning for the winter season to be undertaken immediately. (Resp: - FAO/HQ).
- 5 Re: 3.3
FAO guidelines on monitoring of control efficacy will be reviewed and a plan for their implementation will be developed where applicable.
- 6 Re: 3.4
Guidelines on human safety aspects will be developed/provided. Cholinesterase kits for health monitoring to be provided. Reagents to be provided to DLCO-EA (Resp: - FAO HQ/EMPRES consultant).
- 7 Re: 4.3 and 4.4
Preparations should start immediately, especially for obtaining the necessary experimental permits.