ETOP update for 3rd dekad in January 2006

Desert locust

The desert locust situation remained relatively calm in most of the Sahel, northwest Africa and the Red Sea coast during the past two dekads. Only small-scale breeding continued in parts of **Mauritania** and **Sudan**. A few scattered immature and mature adults and 5th instar hoppers were detected and sprayed on 73 ha in Aftout Faye, central Mauritania during the first dekad of January. Low density immature adults were seen in a few places in Tamesna and 2nd to 5th instar solitary hoppers and immature adults at 50-100 insects/ha were detected in patches of green vegetation in Agaliouk, Air, **Niger**. Control was not necessary due to low density and patchy nature of the locusts. Scattered adults and hoppers persisted in the winter breeding areas in Tokar Delta, **Sudan** where small-scale breeding continued. Breeding will likely continue along the Red Sea coasts in **Sudan**, **Eritrea** and **Yemen**, but significant activities are not likely in the coming months.

According to FAO, cool dry conditions prevailed in the spring breeding areas in western **Pakistan** and southeastern **Iran** during the reporting period and no locusts were reported. However, it is likely that isolated adults may be present and could begin breeding once the temperature rises and conditions become favorable. Other outbreak regions remained relatively calm. In **Mali**, the northerly wind dominated with temperatures oscillating between 20 and 35 degrees centigrade during the day time and 10 to 20 at night. Ecological conditions continued to deteriorate in the gregarization areas and no locusts were reported during this period. Survey teams were not dispatched and locust activities are not expected in the coming months, but monitoring is essential in all outbreak areas.

Red locust

The red locust season is in progress in southern and south-central Africa where some activities have been reported in **Zimbabwe** and **Zambia**. Further detail was not available at the time this update was compiled and more information is being awaited from the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa in Ndola, Zambia and member countries.

Forecast

As the season progresses, more locusts will likely be seen in **Mozambique**, **Malawi**, **Tanzania, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe**. Given the good rain that fell in most of these countries, breeding conditions will likely remain favorable in most places and allow the pest to further development in the coming months. Active surveillance, monitoring and preventive control interventions are recommended.

Armyworm

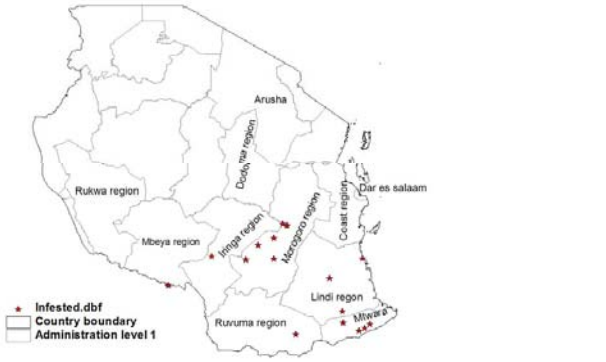
According to Tanzania Armyworm Forecasting and Control Services (AFCS), Tengeru, Arusha, armyworm outbreaks worsened during the reporting week in Mtwara and Lindi regions, southeastern Tanzania. More than 29,000 ha of maize, rice, and sorghum were reported attacked in Masasi district, Mtwara region alone. All 104 villages in Nachingwea district, Lindi region were also reported infested and 1,200 ha of maize, sorghum and rice destroyed in Lindi. Unspecified hectares of crop fields were also destroyed in Kilwa,and Ruangwa district and a total of 1,206 ha were reported attacked in Mbozi district, Mbeya region, Njombe, Iringa region, and Kilombero and Ulanga districts, Morogoro region. Fresh attacks were reported in Tunduru, Ruvuma region (see AFCS map below for details). No further information was received from other affected countries at the time this update was compiled.

Forecast for 30 January to 5 February 2006

With moth catches ranging from 57 to 736/trap being reported in Njombe, Mbeya, Masasi, Ifakara and Newala and traps in Kilosa, Bihawana, Mtwara and Ilula showing positive catches, it is highly likely that more outbreaks will be seen in all of Mtwara and Lindi regions, Tanzania. AFCS predicted that fresh outbreaks will occur in Mbeya, Iringa, Morogoro, part of Ruvuma, and Dodoma regions in the coming weeks. So far, traps at Shinyanga, Tengeru, Karenga, Dodoma, Kongwa, Kondoa and Manyoni reported negative catches and it is likely that these areas may be spared for a little while, as little as getting prepared for an invasion.

Urgent measures are required to mitigate the armyworm situation. Resources should be deployed to positive forecast regions immediately.

Armyworm situation from 16 to 22 January 2006



In anticipation of a potential for increased invasions by subsequent generations, countries in the diffusion paths of the pest need to implement active surveillance, monitoring and a timely reporting of the situation to the appropriate bodies responsible for the coordination/launching of interventions.

Upcoming Event

Member countries of the FAO/EMPRES (Emergency Prevention System for the Desert Locust) Program for the Western Region - the Sahel and northwest Africa will be meeting late February/early March 2006 to develop annual work plan and prepare for the upcoming summer activities.

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