

Locust update as of mid-July, 2007

Yemen

Locust situation

The desert locust (DL) situation continued deteriorating in **Yemen**. Infestations have been reported in remote areas in the interior of the country along the southern edge of the Empty Quarter, stretching from Marib to the border with Oman where up to 300,000-500,000 insects/ha were reported. The **Yemen** Desert Locust Management and Control Center (DLMCC) indicated that corn fields and palm trees in Hadhramaut and Shabwa were damaged by the locusts.

Actions taken

- **Yemen** is launching limited ground control operations in the southern part of the country.
- **FAO, WFP** and the **Government of Yemen** (GoY) are coordinating control campaign which targets the most affected areas in the governorates of Hadhramaut, Shabwa and al-Mahra. WFP (the World Food Program) is making substantial in-kind contributions and so does GoY.
- **FAO** has secured US\$4.4 million through the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and from a contribution made by the Government of Japan (GoJ). The US\$2 million contributed by GoJ to assist operations in the Horn of Africa and Yemen can be used to procure sprayers and protective equipment as well as cover operational expenses but not for purchasing vehicles or pesticides.
- One fixed-wing spray aircraft (Airtractor) has been leased for 120 hours of operations for two to three months (the original plan was to lease two).
- 40,000 liters of pesticides have been donated by **Mauritania** and transported to Yemen by FAO.
- Several vehicles have been leased and fitted with communication equipment and deployed to the campaign areas (CERF cannot be used to purchase vehicles - one of the most crucial items in locust campaigns). According to an FAO Officer, many of the vehicles will likely be available for use past the initial 90 days of operations to ensure sufficient ground support in case the situation further deteriorates, but none of them could possibly be retained by DLMCC past the proposed extension.
- FAO's Senior Locust Officer from the HQ and the Secretariat for the Central Region Commission are currently in **Yemen** assisting with the coordination and launching of the campaign and assessing the situation alongside Yemeni staff.

- **Yemen** has agreed to mobilize the Air Force to provide logistical support and help transport pesticides, equipment and materials to the operation bases. It has also deployed a large cadre of crop protection personnel and other staff to support the campaign.
- **USG** will be providing mobile generators, self-contained camping tents, ChE testing kits and several first aid kits in response to a request by GoY.

Forecast

Locust numbers are likely to increase as a second generation of breeding continues in areas where favorable ecological conditions persist. A lack of adequate aerial and ground support can slow down operations, result in massive invasions and threaten agricultural areas. If that were to happen, large numbers of swarms could also form and invade neighboring countries along both sides of the Red Sea in fall.

Maintaining intensive aerial operations and adequate ground support, including active surveillance and timely interventions are critical to contain the current situation and prevent further invasions. However, this could be undermined by the uncertainty surrounding the recent bombing in the governorate of Marib which has already affected the leasing of spray planes.

Other DL invasion/outbreak regions:

The DL situation in other outbreak regions is relatively calm. A gradual increase will likely be witnessed in a few localities in the coming months as limited-scale activities are progressing in the summer breeding areas along the Red Sea coasts and the Indo-Pakistan borders.

The situation in Somalia is not clear. The Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa was unable to obtain additional information on or confirm AFP's July 7th report of a locust invasion in southern Somalia. No locusts were reported in Ethiopia, Eritrea or Djibouti during this period, but survey and monitoring are in progress in some of the outbreak areas where breeding could commence with the onset of the rains.

East Timor

FAO launched successful aerial control operations using Green Guard (a biological-based pesticide produced in Australia) against swarms in **East Timor**. Limited ground operation was also undertaken against residual hopper bands using conventional pesticides. The operations substantially reduced locust numbers and only a few individuals were detected during the final surveys in late June and controlled by ground means.

West Timor

Aerial surveys in **West Timor** estimated a population of around 70 km² of swarms many of which were expected to lay eggs in June. Limited ground control operations were launched but most of the swarms were inaccessible by ground means. FAO is planning an aerial spraying campaign and Australia has provided assistance to help operations. There is a risk that if left uncontrolled, new swarms will develop in **West Timor** and reinvade **East Timor**.

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Substantial outbreaks of **Moroccan locust** occurred in cultivated and hilly, grassland areas in western **Tajikistan**. The invasions in the North are mixed with swarms of **Italian locust** from **Uzbekistan** and swarms were reported arriving from both **Afghanistan** and **Uzbekistan** in the South. An FAO expert detected up to 10,000 maturing adults/square meter on cow dung and 10 gregarizing adults/square meter in fallow land in **Tajikistan** on June 15th.

Moroccan locust also infested **Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**. Close to 300,000 ha were reported sprayed in Karshi and Termez, South **Uzbekistan** in early June. By mid-June, More swarms arrived from **Tajikistan** and **Turkmenistan** and substantial numbers of locusts were detected in Karshi the following week. However, the situation began improving gradually as some locusts started to die out. A few more swarms that continued arriving from Turkmenistan will likely lay and eventually begin hatching next year.

Migratory locust outbreaks were reported in western Karakalpakstan, **Uzbekistan** where late instar hoppers and adults were detected by mid-June, but control operations were not reported.

Kazakhstan

The Ministry of Agriculture in Almaty reported controlling **Italian locust** on 300,000 ha in grazing land in Western and Southern **Kazakhstan**. This species is a prolific breeder and invades vast areas from northwestern Africa and the Mediterranean region to **Kazakhstan** and other Eurasian countries. Western **Kazakhstan**, Almaty and Kyzyl-Orda regions are invaded almost every year. The most recent large-scale invasion occurred in 1999 and affected up to seven million hectares. During that invasion, locusts were seen everywhere - in towns, on the streets and on buildings. The swarms later spread to **Russia** in the north and **Uzbekistan** in the south. The current invasion, which will likely peak sometime between 2009-2011, is part of a normal cycle for this species (upsurge-scale invasions occur every 10-12 years). In anticipation of a large-scale invasion, **Kazakhstan** allocated US\$1.5 million for 2007 locust operations.

Monitoring is underway in West **Kazakhstan** and **Russia's** southern border although it is unlikely that Russia will be invaded this year.

Red locust and Tree locust

A late receive report indicated that red locust invasions have continued occurring in the Malagarasi Basin, Iku-Katavi Plains and Lake Rukwa Plains in **Tanzania** where locust populations are well above the control threshold of >10 insects/square meter and require immediate spraying. Tree locust invasions were reported in Afar and Somalia regions, **eastern Ethiopia**. Further details were not available at the time this update was compiled.