

Eritrea Desert locust update December 18, 2006

1. Meteorological and ecological conditions

Based on information received from the Plant Protection Department (PPD) in Eritrea, moderate rains fell in the eastern lowlands at the end of the second dekad of November. As a result of this and flooding of the wadis adjacent to the eastern escarpments, vegetation is green over large areas from the extreme north in Karura all the way down to Emberemi. Frequent cloud cover was observed over much of the winter breeding areas where more showers are likely and favorable conditions could continue over the coming weeks.

2. Desert Locust situation

Desert locust infestations were reported in Shelshela, Shieb-Ghedged, Shebha, Meleet, Mersa-Gulbub and Mersa-Teklai in the eastern lowlands beginning the latter part of the first dekad of December. The locusts consisted of solitary and transient immature and mature adults as well as hoppers of various stages seen congregating on *Dipterygium* and *Heliotropium*. Copulation and egg laying were in progress in a few places during this period.

3. Survey and control interventions

According to PPD/Eritrea, four survey teams are currently operating in the eastern lowland areas from Karura to Massawa. Ground control operations are underway in Shelshela, Shieb, Ghedged and Shebah. Seven vehicle-mounted sprayers are being used by the PPD staff and farmers equipped with some 20 motorized and manual knapsack sprayers are operating in Shebha and Shieb-Ghedged. Close to 4,020 ha have been sprayed with the 2,000 l of Chlorpyrifos 24% ULV and 18 l of Phenprothrin 10% EC since the beginning of the current campaign on December 9, 2006. PPD reported operational constraints due to insufficient communication and personal protective equipment.

4. Forecast

Favorable meteorological and ecological conditions will likely continue in some of the winter breeding areas in the eastern lowland and allow locusts to persist, breed on small-scale and increase in number over the coming weeks. Survey and targeted control operations should continue in areas where locust activities have been detected and ecological conditions remain favorable.