

## **Desert Locust update for the Horn of Africa and Sudan covering the first fortnight in December, 2007**

### **Locust situation:**

The Desert Locust situation remained precarious in the Horn of Africa and Sudan in the first fortnight in December. Hoppers and bands were reported in southern Ethiopia and northeastern Kenya and adult groups and individuals as well as large numbers of hoppers were reported in Sudan during this period.

In Ethiopia, locusts were detected in Yabelo, Kebridehar, Gode, Liben and other areas in Oromiya and Somale Regions. While much of the Somale region is inaccessible, the chief pilot and the Dire Dawa base manager of the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO) managed to cross Dawa River and survey adjacent areas in Liben, Somale Region and detected 1st and 2nd instar hoppers in some 85 ha. An unconfirmed report of a mature swarm crossing over from the Moyale District of Kenya has been received. MoA/Eth has deployed a couple of days ago two locust experts equipped with sprayers and pesticides to Liben and Gode to implement survey and control operations. In Gode, a taskforce has been formed by FAO/TECO, WFP, the Regional Agricultural Office, NGOs, and other partners to help monitor the locust situation and coordinate response.

In Kenya, DLCO-EA and the MoA staff conducted survey in several locations in Mandera District and locusts were controlled on some 120 ha between 5-18 December.

In Sudan, breeding has been in progress in and around Tokar Delta in the Red Sea State and augmented by locusts arriving from the summer breeding areas in the interior of the country where ecological conditions have deteriorated. More than 29,450 ha were surveyed in the River Nile, the Red Sea and the North States from 1-17 December and adult locusts and hoppers were controlled on some 6,520 ha, mainly in the Red Sea State during this period.

### **Forecast:**

If ecological conditions remain favorable or improve in the Horn, hoppers will mature, form swarms, especially in areas inaccessible to the survey/control teams, and likely invade the surrounding areas. Ecological conditions have begun deteriorating and locust numbers are declining in several areas Mandera District, however, if conditions improve there is a remote possibility of escapee swarms reaching the heart of Kenya and threaten crops and pasture in early 2008. In Sudan, breeding will likely continue in the Red Sea State and locust numbers will increase in the coming weeks.

It is important that active surveillance and preventive interventions are maintained at all times. Cross-border operations are recommended where applicable.

**OFDA will continue monitoring the situation and advise accordingly.**