

## ETOP Update for February, 2006

### Summary:

Based on information received from the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO/CSA), red locust hopper bands were located in the Iku-Katavi Plains, Malagarasi Basin in Tanzania and in Lake Chilwa/Chiuta Plains in Malawi. The situation in the other outbreak areas remained relatively calm.

Outbreaks of Armyworm were reported in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe during the month. Crops attacked included maize, sorghum, rice and pasture. Control was carried out by affected farmers with assistance from Ministries for Agriculture.

Quelea birds were reported attacking wheat and sorghum in Laikipia district of the Rift Valley Province in Kenya.

### Weather

Normal to above normal rains were recorded at most of the stations near the Red Locust outbreak areas except for Masenge station near the Wembere outbreak area in Tanzania where below average rainfall was recorded in January and February. Vegetation growth was enhanced in most of the outbreak areas where rains fell.

### Red Locust

In February 2006, twenty Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville) hopper bands were located in the Iku Plains and ten in Malagarasi Basin in Tanzania. Five hopper bands were located in the Lake Chilwa/Chiuta Plains in Malawi. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> instar hoppers were seen in the Iku Plains and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instars dominated Malagarasi Basin. Control operations are being planned.

Although hoppers of various densities may be present in the other outbreak areas in the region, so far, no reports were received from there. Vigilant survey and early interventions remain essential.

### Armyworm

Armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta* Walker) outbreaks occurred between January and February 2006 in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. In Malawi, all the 8 Agricultural Development Divisions (ADD) were affected. Outbreaks in Mozambique occurred in the Maputo, Sofala, Manica, Gaza, Inhambane, Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces. Mild to severe armyworm outbreaks occurred in Kabwe, Mkushi, Namwala, Sesheke and Lusaka districts of Zambia. In Zimbabwe, Armyworm outbreaks occurred in all Provinces except Matebeleland South. The worst affected provinces were Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland East. Widespread armyworm outbreaks occurred in the Mbeya, Iringa, Mtwara, Ruvuma, Morogoro, Dodoma, Manyara, and Lindi regions of Tanzania.

In some areas, the pest caused mild to severe damage to cereal crops. Some farmers had to replant more than once due to the severity of the damage. Crops affected included maize, rice, millet, sorghum and grass pasture. The affected farmers carried out control with technical and material assistance from the respective Ministries for Agriculture.

IRLOC/CSA assists member countries by providing Armyworm pheromone traps and accessories.

## Quelea birds

Quelea (*Quelea quelea* L.) outbreaks were reported in Laikipia district of the Rift Valley Province in Kenya where sorghum and wheat crops were attacked. One roost was controlled using a private spray aircraft, while two were sprayed by ground based platform and one by fire bomb (blasting).

There were no reports of Quelea outbreaks from the other IRLCO member-countries.

## Forecast the coming months

Red Locust hoppers are likely to fledge into young adult and form swarms/concentrations in the Iku-Katavi Plains, South Rukwa Plains, and Malagarasi Basin in Tanzania and in the Lake Chilwa/Chiuta plains in Malawi. Isolated, scattered to immature adult populations are expected in the other outbreak areas.

With the onset of long rains in Kenya and Tanzania, the Armyworm outbreaks are likely to occur and continue in these countries. The outbreak season is coming to an end in Malawi, Mozambique Zambia and Zimbabwe and no invasions are expected in these countries.

Quelea breeding is likely to commence in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The breeding birds and their fledglings are likely to cause damage to rain fed and irrigated cereals.

AELGA will continue monitoring the situation and issue updates as necessary.