

## Desert locust update during the 2nd. dekad of April 2007

### Central Region

Adult locusts that are believed to have come from the Red Sea coasts of Sudan and Saudi Arabia were reported in the Nile Valley between Dongola and Atbara in **Sudan** as well as southern **Egypt**. There is a risk that a few swarms could also appear along the Nile and may stay on or continue to move towards the west. Survey operations were carried out over 8,867ha in the northern and southern parts of the Red sea coast, Tokar Delta, and River Nile state, **Sudan** during this dekad. 953 ha were seen infested with varying densities of immature, mature gregarious adult groups as well as first instar hopper bands, mostly in Tokar Delta and the south Red sea coast. Egg laying, hatching and formation of bands of 3rd generation hoppers are in progress. Aerial and ground control operations treated 630 ha using Malathion 96% ULV during this period.

Ground control operations continued against groups of gregarious and solitary immature and mature adults in the extreme north, around Mahmimet and Karura, **Eritrea** where 2,380 ha were sprayed with Chlorpyrifos 24% ULV from 16-20 April.

Survey operations were carried out in Harawa and Elbahay in Shinile Zone, eastern **Ethiopia**. Low density (5-6 insects/sq. m) copulating and laying swarms were detected on 2-2.5 sq. km. Ground control operations were carried out on 35 ha in Harawa using Chlorpyrifos, but a swarm that was detected in Elbahay escaped into the rocky hills of eastern Ethiopia. An egg field measuring 2 sq. km was also discovered in Harawa. DLCO and MoA/Ethiopia will continue survey and control operations with a possible assistance from a CPD team from the HQ.

No reports were received from **NW Somalia (NWS)** or **Djibouti** although some of the swarms that were reported earlier in **NWS** are believed to have moved to **Djibouti, northern Somalia, Yemen** and **Ethiopia** and begun laying.

Ground and aerial control operations are in progress in the central Red Sea coast and in spring breeding areas in the interior of **Saudi Arabia** where swarms that have come from the coastal areas have begun laying eggs. Hatching and band formation could take place in May, followed by fledging and swarm formation in June. If left unabated, swarms could begin crossing the Red Sea soon after and reach the **interior of Sudan** where they could start breeding.

A mature swarm, which was thought to have come from **NWS** began laying eggs on the coast of **Yemen** on 13 April. Hatching will soon follow.

### Eastern Region

A mature swarm was controlled on the coast west of Karachi, **Pakistan**. Solitary adult locusts and small-scale breeding were detected in the interior of western Pakistan and near the coast during a joint survey carried out with **Iran**.

## Western region

The DL situation in the western region remained calm during the 2nd dekad of April. Significant developments are not expected in the coming weeks.

### Migratory locust in East and West Timor

Mid to late instar hoppers of migratory locust were detected along river valleys in two of the main grain producing districts of **East Timor (Timor Leste)** (see photos by the Australian Plague Locust Commission). The locusts caused damage to maize crops and threaten rice plants which were already affected by drought.



(locusts basking in morning sun)



(hoppers, brown blotch, feeding on a rice field)

Small swarms composed of immature adult locusts were first seen in **E. Timor** and a similar situation was reported from **West Timor** (Indonesia) confirming that the infestation straddles a politically sensitive border area. This could not have come at the worst time - the run-off presidential election is planned for early May.

FAO's assistance package for spray operations in **E. Timor**, with funds from CERF, is expected to begin sometime in May. As most of the infested areas are in close proximity to important waterways, it has been decided that **Green Guard** (a *metarhizium*-based, an environmentally friendly biopesticide, produced in Australia) will be used to control the locusts (**E Timor** gets most of its drinking water from rivers that also drain directly in to the sea). Spot treatments with conventional pesticides will also take place to protect crops by ground application equipment. Another FAO locust expert will be dispatched to **West Timor** to assess the situation and assist MoA. **Unless actions are taken on a timely bases, the locusts in W. Timor will likely reinvade E. Timor.**

**All frontline countries are advised to stay vigilant and take actions as necessary.**

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