

Morocco desert locust update for the 3rd dekad of November 2006

I. Meteorological and Ecological conditions

Generally stable and hot weather persisted over most of Morocco during the 3rd dekad of November. A moderate atmospheric depression on the Atlantic coastal plains north of the Sahara province resulted in light to moderate precipitation on November 25. The maximum temperatures were 11-15 °C in the highlands, 20-25 °C in the southeast of the Atlas Mountain and 26-30 °C in the Souss and the Sahara province and the minimum temperatures were 5 -9 °C in the highlands and 15-20 °C in the southern provinces. Annual vegetation is drying in the southeast of the Anti-Atlas and north of the Sahara province between Oued Sakia Alhamra, Samara (26°43"N-011°41'W) and the 25th parallel.

Ecological conditions in the extreme south, particularly in the Awsserd region (22°28'N-014°21'W), were favorable for survival and reproduction of the desert locust where annual vegetation is still green in the oueds and the low laying areas (National Locust Control Center (CNLAA), Agadir, Morocco, 11.29.06).

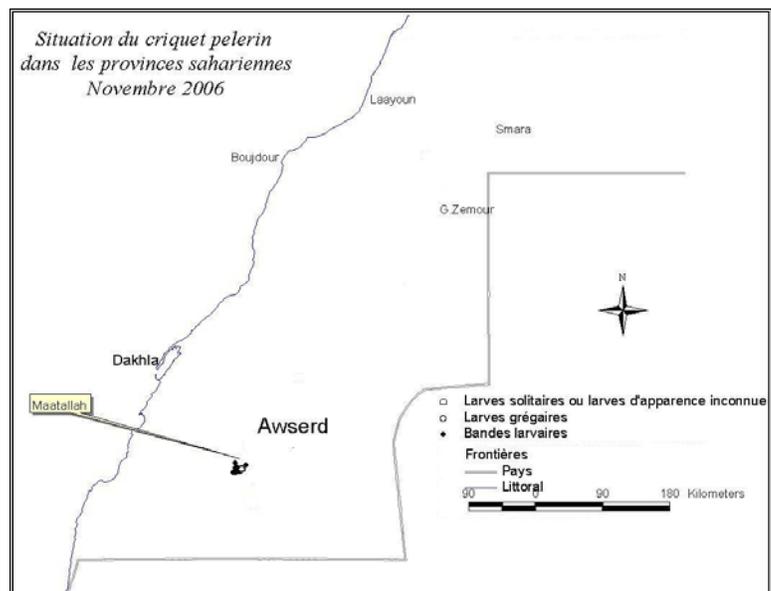
II- Locust situation

CNLAA teams have been conducting survey and control operations in the north-east of Adrar Settouf in the Awsserd region where small-scale reproduction is in progress.

Transient and gregarious hopper bands, up to 50/site, mostly 5th instar mixed with some 4th instar at about 30 insects/m² were detected in areas as large as 400 m² in Moata Allah (22°23'N/015°03'W).

III. Control operations

According CNLAA, ground control teams treated 552 ha of patches of hopper bands dispersed over large areas in Moata Allah, southwest of the country, during the 3rd dekad of November. This brings the total areas treated since the beginning of the current control operations on November 16 to 600 ha.



IV. Forecast

Despite the ongoing control operations, the presence of hoppers and escapee adults in the southwest, where ecological conditions are still favorable, and the potential for incoming swarms from northern Mauritania augmenting those that are already in the country will likely increase the presence of locusts in the coming weeks. This calls for maintaining active survey and timely control operations in the coming weeks.

V. Field Units

Currently, CNLAA maintains two field units each composed of survey and control teams equipped with:

- 1 vehicle mounted with a radio, data collection and transmission (eLocust2)
- 1 vehicle fitted with a Micronair AU 8115 sprayer
- 1 vehicle carrying a battery operated Micro-Ulva atomizer
- camping and protective gear