

**REPORT
EMERGENCY PREVENTION SYSTEM
FOR TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL AND PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES
(EMPRES)
(DESERT LOCUST COMPONENT)**

**2nd meeting of the Joint CRC/EMPRES/DLCO-EA/FAO
Technical Forum for the Central Region (TFCR)**

**Cairo, Egypt
27 - 28 November 2002**

**Plant Protection Service
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
2002**

2nd meeting of the Joint CRC/EMPRES/DLCO-EA/FAO Technical Forum for the Central Region (TFCR)

Participants

1. The 2nd meeting of the Joint CRC/EMPRES/DLCO-EA/FAO Technical Forum for the Central Region (TFCR) was attended by Peter Odiyo (Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa, DLCO-EA), Munir Butrous (FAO Central Region Commission, CRC), Christian Pantenius (EMPRES) and Keith Cressman (FAO Desert Locust Information Service, DLIS).

Summary

2. The objectives of the TFCR are to:
 - harmonize technical approaches between FAO CRC, EMPRES, DLCO-EA and FAO
 - avoid duplication of efforts
 - strengthen regional cooperation
3. Recommendations from the 1st TFCR meeting concentrated on four areas:
 - Training – national
 - Research – bio-pesticides, DGPS
 - Information – mailing list, RAMSES, spray form
 - Survey – joint surveys, northern Somalia
4. Several harmonization topics, including those mentioned above, were identified and discussed during the 2nd meeting. All of these topics are part of the DLCO-EA mandate and are also addressed by DLIS, CRC and EMPRES.

(a) Information

According to its mandate (Article 4), CRC must pass information to member countries in order to keep them properly informed of the Desert Locust situation. At present, this is done by immediately translating the FAO Desert Locust Bulletin into Arabic in Cairo and sending it to member countries. Nevertheless, the issue of information versus data will be clarified at the next session of the Executive Committee (Apr 2003).

DLIS and CRC will collaborate in alerting Central Region countries of important locust situations by discussing the situation together (Cressman and Butrous) prior to sending out alerts. DLIS will take the lead in preparing these alerts. In case DLCO-EA hears of anything, they will contact FAO. All DLIS alerts will be copied to CRC and DLCO-EA.

Starting 1 December 2002, DLCO-EA will modify its monthly bulletin by incorporating the locust situations and forecasts for the DLCO-EA member countries from the monthly FAO Desert Locust Bulletin. This will avoid duplication between the two organizations while allowing increased dissemination of locust information. DLIS will send the PDF and Word versions of the FAO bulletin to Addis and Nairobi.

If DLCO-EA obtains sufficient funding outside of FAO, CRC and EMPRES, RAMSES could be established in Addis as a depository of archived data for the region. This could also be used for research purposes such as preparing case studies.

(b) Emergency preparedness and response

During recession periods, DLCO-EA routinely positions one aircraft in Addis Ababa and Asmara. Aircraft operability, pilot status and member country fuel resources are updated every three months. In the case of increased locust activity such as an outbreak or upsurge, DLCO-EA aircraft equipped with DGPS are made available for survey and control. At the moment, one such aircraft can be deployed to any member country within 7-

10 days upon request and clearance from the host country¹. Efforts are being made to address obstacles to rapid deployment such as updated pilot licensing and medical certification. Internal clearance for operations is the responsibility of the host country and may take longer. DLCO-EA aircraft are insured to cover all Middle Eastern and African countries subject to security conditions. DLCO-EA funds do not cover DSA and operational costs in non-member countries. The latter must have signed an Instrument (Letter) of Adherence that is approved by DLCO-EA's Council and registered with the Government of Ethiopia. DLCO-EA will provide a sample to EMPRES so that steps can be taken to organize these letters within the context of national contingency planning in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Yemen for consideration at the next DLCO-EA Council meeting (Sep 2003).

(c) Standard Operating Procedures (survey and control)

It was proposed to make available summarized information on the key points of survey and control procedures in three pocket-sized laminated sets of cards (ground survey, ground control, and aerial survey and control) for use by locust officers in the field. The first two sets would be translated into Arabic and perhaps French. The cards should be distributed as widely as possible. These can be updated as more experience is gained in the field. Butrous will prepare the control related SOPs and Cressman will do the survey in collaboration with Bahakim.

(d) Aerial survey

Based on information from SPOT-VEG imagery provided by DLIS, DLCO-EA carried out two surveys for ground verification using its aircraft. The results were reported to DLIS but no further action was taken due to staff shortages (a DLIS remote sensing officer). If this activity is to be continued, a more permanent solution for the officer in Rome must be found, validation methodology should be developed and provided by DLIS and qualified national locust staff should be involved in the participating countries. Validation exercises at the moment are limited by the availability of funds. DLCO-EA does not have funds for survey, only for control.

(e) Training

FAO is finalizing a Desert Locust Master Trainer Manual (DLMTM) in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of affected countries to organize and conduct their own training. DLCO-EA welcomed this initiative and will incorporate the DLMTM into their training programmes in invasion countries. At the same time, DLCO-EA is finalizing a training manual on aerial control. Once these are finished, three to four Master Trainers from the Central Region should attend an aerial control training course at DLCO-EA in September/October 2003. This course may be combined with a DGPS demonstration.

In order to improve aerial spraying, DLCO-EA will provide training on ground support to key countries who are about to undertake aerial control operations. This will be handled by the pilot and the national Master Trainer once the pilot arrives in-country and before spraying commences.

¹ The following procedure should be incorporated into national contingency plans:

- (1) (1) PPD makes request to DLCO-EA including the rationale, location of operations, airstrip positions, duration and need of airworthiness certificate;
- (2) (2) DLCO-EA responds to PPD within 24-36 hours with aircraft type and registration code, name, nationality and passport details of the crew, departure base, suggested route, arrival date and time of aircraft, and copy of airworthiness certificate (if required);
- (3) (3) PPD liaises with ministries (Agriculture, Civil Aviation, Foreign Affairs, Defense/security, etc.) to determine deployment routing and obtain internal clearances for locust operations;
- (4) (4) PPD informs DLCO-EA of approved deployment routing and that internal operational clearance is obtained;
- (5) (5) DLCO-EA pilot informs PPD via the DLCO-EA Base Manager where to preposition fuel and oil within the country.
- (6)

(f) Research

DLCO-EA is shifting its emphasis to the use of bio-pesticides already available on the market. Although the organization continues to play a vital role in the registration process of bio-pesticides within a regional framework, greater efforts are required in documenting the work that has been done so far in the region and in keeping in close contact with EMPRES/CRC. Current computerization efforts at DLCO-EA should be given top priority, and EMPRES may be able to provide some limited support. Meanwhile, CRC is supporting the introduction of metarhizium as an alternative control product, and DLCO-EA will participate in a demonstration on bio-pesticides (Port Sudan, January 2003) and will be involved in upcoming trials in Tanzania against Red Locust (spring 2003). DLCO-EA is encouraged to submit research proposals to EMPRES for consideration.

5. Northern Somalia

If DLCO-EA funds materialize, a new caretaker could be appointed in Hargeisa and work closely with the EMPRES link person.

Actions to be takenInformation

- The issue of information versus data dissemination within the Central Region will be clarified at the next session of the Executive Committee. (April 2003)
- DLIS and CRC will collaborate in alerting Central Region countries of important locust situations prior to sending out alerts. (ongoing)
- DLCO-EA to modify its monthly bulletin by incorporating the locust situations and forecasts for the DLCO-EA member countries from the monthly FAO Desert Locust Bulletin. (December 2002)
- DLIS will send the PDF and Word versions of this bulletin to DLCO-EA in Addis and Nairobi. (from December onwards)
- DLCO-EA will attempt to identify funding sources outside of FAO, CRC and EMPRES for RAMSES at Addis.

Emergency preparedness and response

- DLCO-EA will provide updated details of aerial fleet operationality to CRC and EMPRES every three months. (from December onwards)
- DLCO-EA will provide a sample Instrument (Letter) of Adherence to EMPRES so that they can be finalized within the context of national contingency planning in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in time for consideration at the next DLCO-EA Council meeting in September 2003. (December 2002)
- EMPRES will include procedures of requesting DLCO-EA aircraft in national contingency plans. (ongoing)

Standard Operating Procedures (survey and control)

- CRC and DLIS to prepare SOP field cards for survey and control. (March 2003)

Aerial Survey

- Validation methodology should be developed and provided by the DLIS Remote Sensing Officer. (February 2003)
- DLCO-EA can provide an aircraft for any future validation exercises if and when outside funds are identified and become available.

Training

- DLCO-EA will incorporate the FAO DLMTM in its training programmes held in invasion countries.
- DLCO-EA will send a draft in January 2003 of its aerial control training manual to DLIS, CRC and EMPRES for comment by March 2003.
- Three to four Master Trainer from the Central Region should attend an aerial control training course organized by DLCO-EA in Addis Ababa or Nairobi. This may be combined with a DGPS demonstration. (September/October 2003)

- If a country is about to undertake aerial control against Desert Locust using DLCO-EA aircraft, the DLCO-EA pilot and the national Master Trainer will conduct a short course on ground support for aerial operations to PPD staff before the start of aerial spray operations.

Research

- DLCO-EA will try to obtain the report of the VT-Pan-African Workshop that was held two years ago as well as make available technical reports on metarhizium to EMPRES and keep in closer contact with EMPRES/CRC.
- EMPRES will provide two computers to DLCO-EA as a means of improving communications

The third meeting of the TFCR should be convened before the end of 2003 to review progress that has been made on the above issues and to discuss any other matters that relate to the harmonization of technical approaches between CRC, EMPRES, DLCO-EA and FAO.