



# DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(19 Feb 1998)



## General Situation as of 19 February 1998

The Desert Locust situation improved during the past few weeks along the Red Sea coastal plains as a result of control operations and the drying of the vegetation. Most of the current control operations are concentrated in Saudi Arabia against hopper bands while smaller operations are in progress in Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan and Yemen. There is a possibility that a few small groups or swarms may form in the coming weeks in Sudan and Eritrea due to the difficulty of undertaking operations in inaccessible areas. Continued vigilance is required in all Central Region countries.

New information received since the last Bulletin No. 232 (3 February 1998) indicates that the swarms which arrived on the Red Sea coastal plains of **Saudi Arabia** in January laid eggs which have now started to hatch. As a result, early instar hopper bands are present on the plains from Rabigh (2242N/3910E) to south of Jeddah. A total of 55 ground teams and 3 aircraft have treated more than 25,000 ha so far. As very little rainfall has occurred in the past month, vegetation is starting to become dry and reports suggest that operations could come to an end by early March.

In **Sudan**, control operations on the Red Sea coastal plains have declined due to drying conditions

from north of Tokar Delta to the Egyptian border. However, vegetation remains green in the Tokar Delta where aerial and ground control operations continue against small hopper bands and fledglings. Although no swarms formed in Tokar, a few small maturing swarms were reported arriving from an inaccessible area to the south. In **Eritrea**, infestations have declined as a result of control operations and drying vegetation in some coastal areas. Results from recent aerial surveys indicate that vegetation is still green in certain places on the coast and that there are small infestations of hopper groups, bands and fledglings present. In **Egypt**, a few more swarms were reported in the south-east. During short periods of southerly winds, some of these swarms moved northwards along the coast, almost reaching Hurghada. These swarms were treated up to the 10th. One of them probably crossed the Red Sea to northern Saudi Arabia where it was controlled.

In **Yemen**, local breeding is in progress on the coastal plains of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Ground control operations have treated nearly 2,900 ha of dense hopper bands on the Red Sea coastal plains so far this month. In **Djibouti**, there were small infestations of Tree Locusts and Desert Locusts. In northern **Somalia**, there were several unconfirmed reports of infestations of Tree Locust, Migratory Locust and Desert Locust on the coast near the Djibouti border. Small late instar Desert Locust hopper bands were present about 250 km to the east near Berbera. Clarification is being sought.

Elsewhere, a few isolated solitarious adults were present in northern **Mauritania**.

Other Locusts. Aerial and ground control operations continue in **Madagascar** against major infestations of Migratory Locust and Red Locust.

The FAO Desert Locust Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by fax, e-mail, FAO pouch and airmail by the Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, AGP Division, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is also available on the Internet.

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