

Madagascar locust update for the 3rd dekad of May, 2011 with a forecast for the next dekad

Meteorological and ecological conditions

Dry conditions continued into the 3rd dekad of the month in the Southwest, northern and the northeastern outbreak areas. However, favorable conditions persisted in the Horombe in the central and Babaria in the circus Manambien in the southeast. The Tandrano-Ankazoabo plateau in the West and North was very dry. A stormy episode that occurred on May 27 resulted in 10 to 20 mm of rain in the area between south of Mangoky and Onilahy as well as Horombe.

Locust situation

During this dekad, 2nd generation mature adults and 3rd generation fledglings (immature adults) left the concentration and the transient multiplication areas and colonized the central FRIEND and southeast regions. Small 2nd and 3rd transient hopper bands were observed in Horombe. A gregarization and swarming area was detected between the transient multiplication and northwest FRIEND zones in the vicinity of Iaborano where 4th and 5th instar bands as well as immature adults at a distance of 1 km were observed over 15-20,000 ha.

Dense gregarious 3rd stage transient swarms measuring about 500 ha were detected in Beraketa-Isoanala-Ianabinda region, east of south Horombe, but the origin of these swarms could not be verified. In addition, locally bred less dense smaller swarms measuring 50-100 ha were also detected along the borders of the transient multiplication and central infestation and gregarization zones.

Impacts of the locust invasions on crops and pasture

Significant crop/pasture damage has not been reported during this period as most of the locusts were in their natural habitat where conditions were favorable owing to the heavy rains that started towards the end of December, 2010 and continued well into early 2011. In addition, the control operations launched by FAO-CNA also contributed to the reduced movement of large numbers of locusts to cropping areas. A few hoppers that escaped to cropping areas adjacent to the natural habitat may have caused some damage.

Intervention actions

During the 3rd dekad of May, 3,500 ha were treated by complete coverage using spores of GreenMuscle (GM) (a fungal-based biopesticide) (3,300 ha were sprayed against 9 swarms and 200 ha were treated against 2nd instar hopper bands using 10 kg of GM diluted in 200 l of diesel. As of May 31st, **a cumulative total of 205,361 ha** have been treated and/or protected by air and ground means since the current campaign began on November 28, 2010.

During this dekad, the two helicopters logged 25 hours and 55 minutes bringing the total hours logged since the beginning of the campaign to 744 hours and 38 minutes (572 hours and 40 minutes and 171 hours and 58 minutes by F-GXLA and F-GHEV chopper, respectively).

Current pesticide inventory and empty containers management

Pesticide inventory (in liters)

By FAO

Pesticides	Acquired	Used	Available (31/05/11)
Chlorpyrifos	11,000	11,000	0.00
Nomolt	18,000	18,000	0.00
GM	1,150	50	1,100

By CNA

Pesticides	Acquired	Date acquired	Used (31/05/11)
Chlorpyrifos	28,300	3/23-5/13	
Chlorpyrifos	69,200	5/13 (expected)	
Nomolt	0.00	-	
GM	0.00	-	
Imipest	4,500	4/13	4,500

Total 102,000

As of May 31st, 640 (six hundred and forty) 200-liter empty containers have been temporarily stored at the main CNA central storage facility in Tuléar under the supervision of the focal point for the management of pesticides as well as in the zonal CNA locust centers (ZA) under the supervision of the ZA agents.

Forecast:

Sufficient information was not available on the situation in the northwest transient multiplication and FRIEND zones at the time this report was compiled, but there is a likelihood of breeding taking place

in the coming months in areas where conditions are favorable. Nevertheless, significant locust activities are not expected in the lowland and plateau south of Mangoky where infestations would likely be very low as vegetation is already dry or drying.

In the central region, close to 500,000 ha likely harbor locusts. Adults and hoppers will likely continue developing, and begin laying (some females have begun laying in small numbers in areas where eco-meteorological conditions are favorable, mostly in the FRIEND). More locusts will likely move from the outbreak areas in the west to the east and reach the transient gregarization (TG) zones. Hoppers from 1st to 4th instar that are sparsely scattered at a distance of 1-2 km towards the end of May, are likely to form small to medium size gregarious swarms in the TGZ and south of the plague areas. Medium size adult swarms that departed the south and split will likely remain dormant until October-November when the 2011-2012 breeding begins. Androy remains very worrisome given the good eco-meteorological conditions which persisted in Beraketa and Betsiriry, too (particularly Mandronarivo and Malaimbandy). All eyes should be on these and other populations in the TGZ and infestation zones during the coming months and routine monitoring and collaborations with the plan AD2M of FIDA should continue to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Note: USAID through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance responded in time and generously to the appeal issued by the UN/FAO in support of the locust emergency campaign operations in Madagascar. Other donors made contributions and/or have pledged. End note.

Planned activities:

On May 30th, the Betyoka airbase was closed and personnel and materials were moved to Tuléar and the media team was scheduled to travel back to Antananarivo. An aerial survey was scheduled for Mikoboka, Analavelona and Low Betsiriry (Mondronarivo) on June 1st and 2nd. On June 3rd, collection of empty pesticide containers from the zonal offices to the centralized in Tuléar will be begin for proper disposal. On June 4th and 5th, the survey helicopter will continue surveying on its way back to Antananarivo via Morondava, Miandrivazo and Maintirano with an FAO consultant and CNA staff. On June 6th, the FAO campaign coordinator returns to Antananarivo. A team of FAO staff and consultants will also travel to Madagascar to begin evaluation and assessment of the campaign operations and meet and review the 2010-11 the campaign and discusses perspectives for 2011/2012. The

FAO campaign coordinator and consultant locust expert will hold a final wrap up meeting with CNA, FAO and other staff and representatives on June 9th before they wrap up their mission on June 11th (**Source: Amadou KAMARA, FAO-CNA, FAO, 6/01/2011**).

Recommendations

Timely surveys, prepositioning supplies and materials and launching interventions on a timely manner are crucial to successfully abate and minimize any impending locust threats.

OFDA/TAG will continue closely monitoring the situation and issue updates and advice accordingly.

For more information, please, contact us at:
ybelayneh@usaid.gov