

Madagascar locust update for the 1st dekad of May, 2011 with a forecast for the next dekad

Meteorological conditions

During the first decade of May, the moisture deficit remained far below the optimum suitable level for the Malagasy locust and the gregarization area was progressively drying up, heralding the beginning of the dry season. Vegetation was also drying up in the transient multiplication and gregarization areas except on the coastal areas in Adrov and the vicinity of Ampamolara.

Locust situation

A 1 km by 3 km swarm composed of mature and immature adults at a density of 250 to 2,000 insects/ha was observed in the northwest on Ankazoabo plateau between Tandrano and Mani. The swarm was seen flying from the Southeast towards the northwest at a height of 15 -25 m.

A transient and gregarious swarm at a density of 350 insects/m² was also seen flying overhead at a height of 10-25 m in the central area on the Horombe plateau in Vohitramboa, Ianakafy, Analamary, Andiolava, Andriandampy and Betroka. It was seen coming from the southwest and headed northwest and/or northeast following the direction of the predominant wind. Gregarious 1st to 3rd instar hoppers were also reported in these areas. The locusts invaded an estimated total area of 25,000 ha.

Swarms were also reported leaving the transient multiplication and gregarization zones on the Mahafaly plateau and on plains of Bekily-Fotadrevo and by the end of the dekad, swarms were seen only on about 100 hectare.

Low density (500-2,000 insects/ha) medium size (50 ha) swarms were reported on Belomotra plateau passing through the Sakondry basin. Dense swarms and copulating adults (10-30 insects/m², 3-6 insects/m² copulating) were observed in the south and southeast zones in the surrounding of Manambien, between Tsivory and Tranomaro. The locusts were solitary to transient and were covering more than 20 000 ha. Swarms were also seen flying out of the plateau and the coastal lowland of Karimbola and on the coastal lowland Androy.

Impacts of current locust invasions on crops and pasture

Crop or pasture damage has not been reported during this period as most locusts were in their natural habitat and the ongoing control operations have reduced the risk the impacts of locusts. However, as the swarms continue

moving between outbreak and invasion areas, the threats to crops and pasture is eminent.

Intervention actions

During this dekad 7 swarms were treated on 1,600 ha by air with 1,600 l of Chlorpyrifos 240 ULV. The operations required 13 hours and 19 minutes. Data was not available for ground control conducted during the current dekad. As of May 10th, a cumulative grand total of 187,806 ha (101,980 ha with Chlorpyrifos 240 ULV) have been controlled or protected since the current control campaign began on November 28, 2010.

The two helicopters dispatched by FAO for survey, control and other operations have logged in 685 hours and 46 minutes since the beginning of the current campaign on October 13, 2010.

Pesticide inventory and empty containers management

As of May 10, 2011, CNA-FAO pesticide inventory at the air base stood at 0.00 l of Chlorpyrifos 240 ULV, 7,000 l of Nomolt 50 UL, 1,150 kg of GreenMuscle (biopesticide) and 4,500 l of Imidachlopride.

As part of an effort to ensure safety of humans and protect the environment, six hundred and four (604) two hundred-liter empty pesticide containers have been recovered and stored under the supervision of the zonal CNA agents and the central pesticide store manager in Tuléar. Environmental monitoring activities are scheduled to commence in Belomotra and Mahafaly.

Forecast:

Swarms will continue northward displacement following the direction of the predominant wind and new hatchings, hopper developments and band formations will occur during the 2nd dekad of May. New swarms may begin forming towards the end of the month and by early June. Similar situations may occur in the surrounding of Manambien, where favorable conditions were detected during the first dekad

Note: The UN/FAO and the Malagasy Center for Locust Control are spearheading the current control campaign and USAID through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance responded in time and favorably to the appeal issued in support of the locust emergency campaign operations. Other donors have pledged and/or made contributions. and it is anticipated that this will likely continue. End note.

Planned activities:

FAO consultants, including the chief campaign coordinator as well as local and international locust experts will be dispatched to Tuléar from the second dekad to support and determine campaign operations (**Source: Amadou KAMARA, FAO-CNA, 5/14/2011**).

Recommendations

Timely surveys as well as preventive and curative control interventions should continue to mitigate locust populations and abate further developments. Prepositioning supplies and materials as well as maintaining vigilance and timely interventions are key to a successful locust operations and minimizing any impending threats.

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

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