



Locust Crisis in Madagascar

08 May 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 43.9 million*** are required to return to a recession of the locust populations by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016. **One or two campaigns alone will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- **Since the start of the 1st campaign, in September 2013, locust populations have been controlled on nearly 993 000 hectares.**
- The **three-year programme**, jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, in response to the plague focuses on:
 - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
 - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
 - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
 - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- On 23 April 2014, the Government of Japan signed a funding agreement of USD 2 million to contribute to the 2014/2015 locust campaign. The **current funding gap exceeds USD 15 million**. All funds are required to fully implement the programme, else the plague could severely affect a family's ability to provide for itself.

LATEST UPDATE

The 2nd generation of breeding of the rainy season came to an end. In early April, numerous and dense medium-size swarms of young winged locusts were present in the invasion area, mainly in western Madagascar. Later in the month, several swarms reached the "Hautes Terres", where they were probably carried up by the strong winds generated by the tropical cyclone Hellen, which hit northwestern Madagascar (Mahajanga area) early April. Some of them even reached the suburbs of Antananarivo, creating some trouble but no damage. Huge early instar hopper bands of the 3rd generation were detected in the northwestern part of the outbreak area (southeast Toliara) at the beginning of April. Therefore, with the formation of new swarms, the impact of Hellen and the results of control operations, the shape of the infested area changed as compared to the previous month, with a lesser North extension but a greater extension towards the East, in the central part of the Island. The rainfall decreased in April but the vegetation cover is still green and the soil moisture relatively important, which is suitable for the development of the 3rd generation of the Migratory Locust.

RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

Locust Watch Unit continues to produce ten-day and monthly bulletins analyzing the locust situations and documenting the results of the survey and control operations which are distributed to all stakeholders in Madagascar and published on the FAO Web site dedicated to the locust crisis.

The first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014): Aerial survey and control operations have received a tremendous boost with the arrival of a third helicopter and a fixed-wing spraying aircraft in February and March 2014 respectively. Since then, three mobile aerial bases (which move according to the evolving locust situation and the security constraints) have been deployed; they are currently located in Betsioky, in the outbreak area; in Fianarantsoa, northeast of the outbreak area and in Tsiroanomandidy, west of Antananarivo. With the arrival of these aircraft, control operations have doubled in intensity: between 20 March and 30 April 2014, about 593 000 hectares were treated with chemical pesticides and biopesticides or protected with insect growth regulators [IGRs], bringing the total area treated/protected since the start of the campaign to nearly 993 000 hectares. From January 2014 onwards, several international specialists, including locust experts and logisticians, have been deployed to support field operations. In March 2014, an international biopesticide expert provided on-the-job training to campaign staff on the use and spraying of biopesticides in case of locust control operations in environmentally sensitive areas.

Environmental considerations: About 50 percent of the conventional pesticides required for the first locust control campaign was donated by the Governments of Algeria (30 000 litres), Mauritania (30 000 litres) and Morocco (200 000 litres) from their pesticide stocks, thus limiting the environmental risks associated with the storage and disposal of surplus stocks in the Sahel. In March 2014, an environmentalist trained national staff on evaluating the environmental impact of locust control operations. In close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit, the Human Health and Environmental Management Plan is being implemented.

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
43.9 million* FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	28.2 million (Government of Madagascar through a Work Bank loan, Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, European Union, France, Italy, Japan, Norway, and USA)	15.7 million
* The budget for the three-year programme required adjustment from the previous estimate of USD 41.5 million to USD 43.9 million based on current (actual) market prices of inputs and services required for the first campaign.		

FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Web site: www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/
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