

Locust situation in Madagascar during the third dekad of January, 2011 and a forecast for the next dekad

Meteorological conditions

During the 3rd dekad of January, tropical front that formed over the Mozambique Channel resulted in heavy rains bringing more moisture to the primary breeding and transient locust breeding as well as gregarization areas in Madagascar. Many areas of primary and transient breeding and concentrations, including Manja, Isoanala, Ankomanga, Analamary Befandriana-sud, Fotadrevo Ejeda, Beahitse, Bekily, Betioky-Sud etc received above normal rain during this period.

Locust situation

The locust situation continued further developing during the 3rd dekad of January. Hoppers and bands concentrated in Befandriana, Bekily, Fotadrevo, Vineta, and Fiherenana in some 8,600 ha. Medium to dense, largely 3rd instar hopper bands (20 to 100 insects/m²), were scattered over a dozen to hundreds of square meters within a 50 to 150 meter distance in Befandriana, Bekily and Fotadrevo. Solitary and transient low to medium density (10-30 insects/m²) 2nd instar hoppers mixed with immature adults were sighted in close to 15,000 ha in the northern gregarization areas in Mikea and Manon. Low density immature adults, 40 to 300 individuals/ha, were detected in the primary outbreak areas and the concentration zones in Manja and Ihosy. A total of 29,100 ha were reported infested, but not [crop] damage was reported during this time.

Interventions

During this dekad, some 6,040 ha were sprayed by air. As of January 31st, a total of 8,240 ha have been treated with pesticides since control operations first started on November 28, 2010. During this dekad, more than 30 flight hours were logged for spray operations and surveying and a cumulative total of 389 hours and 27 minutes have been logged for the two helicopters since the current campaign began on October 15, 2010. Forty one (41) 200 l empty metal drums are temporarily stored under the supervision of the CNA in Tuléar for a proper disposal at a latter date.

Forecast

Hopper bands and groups as well as immature adults will continue forming during the course of the first dekad of February and will give rise to further gregarization. Control operations will be required against these groups in Bekily, Mikea, around the mouth of Mangoky, in Belomotra, lowland of Befandriana and elsewhere. Hatching could take place in the lowlands of Tuléar and in the south of the Circus Manambien. Vigilance and preventive interventions remain essential.

Logistics

As of January 31st, pesticide stocks stand at 101,760 l of *Chlorpyrifos* 240 ULV, 18,000 l of *Nomolt* 50 UL (IGR) and 600 kg of *GreenMuscle* (a biopesticide). Two helicopters are strategically placed in Tuléar and in areas close to where spray operations are carried out.

FAO-CNA plans for the next dekad

The FAO-CNA team will continue aerial spraying and survey operations in Fiherenana and launch barrier treatment in Befandrina, Manombo basin and Mikea during the first dekad of February. Aerial and ground surveys will continue in the concentration and transient breeding areas in the north and central zones and in other breeding areas in the south. The team will pursue pre-positioning of pesticides in Betioky and Ejeda. The team will also continue its dekadal updates on the locust situation and progresses made as well as constraints encountered during the course of the campaign (source: FAO-CNA, 02/07/2011).

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