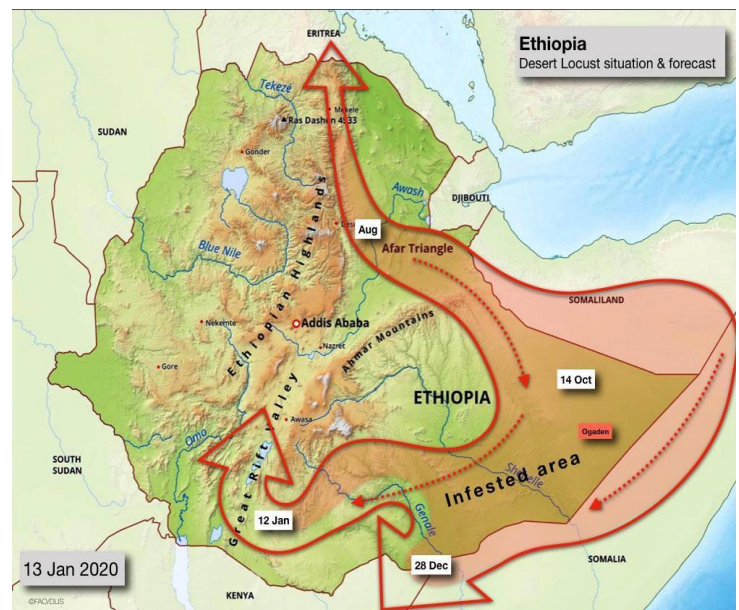


IN NUMBERS

<p>125 Woredas affected - of which 73 have breeding sites</p>	<p>544 km² is the source of invasion (breeding sites for hopper multiplication), of which 480 km² is controlled</p>	<p>Desert Locusts from 64 km² escaped control, affecting more than 1 800 km²</p>	<p>USD 6 million urgently needed for preventive & control operations</p>
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KEY MESSAGES

- Ethiopia is experiencing the **worst Desert Locust (DL) invasion in 50 years**, according to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture.
- The invasion might lead to a **considerable drop in agricultural production, livestock feed and forest cover** and contribute to **livelihood loss and food insecurity**, in Ethiopia and neighboring countries.
- FAO urgently seeks USD six million to scale up preventive and control measures including surveillance, monitoring, ground and aerial spraying, and community mobilization and awareness creation possibly until the end of June 2020.
- Although aerial and ground control operations have been successful in 480 km² (out of the 544 km² where locusts bred - 88 percent of the DL population), the 12 percent uncontrolled population, solely present in the Somali region, has covered 64 km² which holds on average 3.2 billion locusts (@50 million per km²).
- The priority for prevention and control is the Somali Region where 94 km² was affected between mid-November and end of December 2019, as well as the new invasion areas in Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
- Up to 125 Woredas (up from 56 in October 2019) are affected by the invasion. The total affected area is in excess of 2 350 km².
- There are only 136 staff fully engaged in preventive and control operations. There are also approx. 1 800 experts and scouts working on survey and control, but partially engaged. A crisis of this scale would require at least 2 000 staff fully engaged.



Desert Locusts in the Somali Region

Note: All data and information from Ethiopia's Federal Ministry of Agriculture

CONTEXT

The first Desert Locust mature swarms entered Ethiopia in June 2019. The hopper bands recorded until the end of December 2019 covered more than 544 km² of which 88 percent was effectively controlled and 66.8 million MT of green vegetation was spared. However, the 12 percent uncontrolled locust population solely present in the Somali region has covered 64 km², which holds on average 3.2 billion locusts (@50 million per km²). This population has produced invading locusts, which have moved to new areas in the Somali, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' regional states and even crossed to Kenya. The locusts have consumed approximately 8.9 million MT of green vegetation in the source areas over a two-month period.

Massive hopper bands formation is ongoing in rangeland of the Somali Region and fledging into young adults. More breeding swarms from Yemen and Somalia continue to arrive in the Somali Region. The above-normal rainfall in the October-December 2019 period created favourable conditions for breeding and production of hoppers in the affected areas. Considering the presence of rain and green vegetation in the Somali Region, the DL multiplication may continue until June 2020.

Escapee swarms from the breeding sites have also invaded more areas where they are attacking green vegetation including standing crops like wheat, teff, sorghum and maize, pasture fields and forest covers. Crop and pasture losses (yet to be quantified) have been registered in eastern Amhara, Tigray, Somali, and Oromia regional states.

The DL invasion is threatening a big segment of about 85 percent of the country's population that depends on agriculture for livelihoods. Already, about 8.5 million people are food insecure and in need of food assistance (IPC, 2019). Moreover, Ethiopia is still recovering from years of consecutive droughts and dealing with internal displacement.

Since October 2019, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa have been calling for immediate action to control the DL invasion in Ethiopia. The Government of Ethiopia will continue to control hopper bands, fledged immature adults and newly arrived egg-laying swarms, particularly in the Somali region and other winter breeding areas. There is also a need to conduct an environmental impact assessment, to establish the impact of the sprayed pesticides on humans, animals and the environment.

Government needs to strengthen its workforce capacity: only 136 staff are fully engaged (and approx. 1 800 partially engaged), while this crisis requires at least 2 000 fully engaged staff.

FAO RESPONSE, TARGETS AND FUNDING

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Control of hopper band formation in the Somali Region
- Control fledged population of DL in Afar, Amhara, Tigray, Oromia and Somali regional states
- Prevention of swarm movement to winter breeding sites within Ethiopia and to neighboring countries

PLANNED ACTIVITIES (October 2019 – June 2020)

- Control fledgling hoppers and immature adults
- Survey and identify more breeding sites (egg laying adults and egg fields)
- Survey and control newly hatched hoppers, particularly in Afar (late laid sites) and current winter breeding areas in the Somali region
- Monitor adult swarm movement to prevent migration to spring breeding sites
- Conduct a pesticide environmental impact assessment
- Community awareness and mobilization

FUNDING

FAO is urgently seeking USD 6 million

To support the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the Desert Locust Control Organization in their efforts to control DL invasion by preventing the migration of the fledged populations.

