Email: locust@nic.in

F. No.6-2/2011-12/Locust

Government of India

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

To,
The Director of Agriculture,
Government of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana & Punjab

Date: 08/05/2019

Subject: Preparedness for Locust control during the summer/ monsoon season of 2019-regarding.

Sir,

You are well aware that Desert Locust population persists in the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and in South West Asia. Considering the very latest Desert Locust situation updated by Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) through Locust Watch (www.fao.org/ag/locusts) and expected developments as well as summarising the situation of last month and the six-week forecast in the monthly FAO Desert Locust Bulletin No. 487, it is important specifically for above western states of India in the coming months in relation to the important locust situation underway in the spring breeding areas of Iran and Pakistan. This year spring breeding in southern Iran and southwest Pakistan is unusually heavy, especially in Iran where infestations are widely distributed beyond the traditional southeast and substantial aerial and ground control operations are in progress against locust groups, hopper bands and a few swarms. Despite these efforts and because of the difficult nature of Desert Locust survey and control, spring breeding will continue during May and probably into June, causing locust numbers to increase further. As vegetation dries out, locusts will concentrate and could form small hopper bands and adult swarms. Another generation of spring breeding in Iran and Pakistan is not expected; instead, the adult groups and small swarms that form are more likely to move towards the summer breeding areas along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border, including Rajasthan and Gujarat, to meet the monsoon rains for summer breeding from July onwards.

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Locusts could start to arrive in India as early as about mid-June in advance of the monsoon rains. The scale of this movement depends on spring breeding and the success of survey and control operations during May and June in Iran and Pakistan.

We are also watching the developing situation in Yemen in case spring breeding gives rise to swarms in June/July that could move to India if ecological conditions do not remain favourable in Yemen and will provide ample warning in advance of any threat.

Considering the above situation and wind direction towards SDA, there is a risk of adult swarms incursion in to Indian bordering districts of Scheduled Desert Area of Rajasthan and Gujarat States as well as bordering areas of Punjab and Haryana which may pose a potential threat to the crops during kharif season. Due to the possibility of favourable ecological conditions during May/June in Pakistan as well as in certain parts of SDA of Rajasthan and Gujarat, it may be favourable for locust breeding.

Depending upon favourable ecological conditions, the existing population and its subsequent development, if not controlled in Pakistan, Iran and Yemen, there is a chance of locust swarm invasion in to SDA of Rajasthan and Gujarat and bordering areas of Punjab and Haryana. The various field functionaries of Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) have been alerted to keep continuous and constant watch/ vigilance and to conduct locust surveys in the Thar Desert of India. LWO has been fully geared-up to face any locust emergency situation.

It is, therefore, requested to activate your field functionaries to conduct locust surveys in the respective areas and intimate/liaise to the nearest Locust Circle Office (LCO)/ LWO, Jodhpur under intimation to this Directorate for rebuffing the locust attack effectively. Your assistance in the form of manpower and other logistics is highly solicited, in case locust emergency occurs on large scale.

Yours faithfully,

(Rajesh Malik)
Plant Protection Adviser

Copy to:

1. Officer In Charge, LWO, Jodhpur, LCO, Bikaner, Bhu, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Suratgarh, Jalore, Phalodi, Nagaur, Churu, Palanpur and FSIL, Bikaner for information and similar action. They are advised to monitor the locust situation more closely and carefully and adopt suitable control measures, if needed. Findings of these surveys should be communicated to the Directorate. They are also advised to keep close liaisoning with the concerned State Authorities and Border Security Forces located in the Scheduled Desert Areas.

2. The Joint Secretary (PP), DAC&FW, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi