TRENDING

Somalia Declares National Emergency as Swarms of Locusts Attack East Africa

By bestfolkmedicine · 03/02/2020 · 2 min read



Because of a large swarm of locusts, Somalia has declared a national emergency. And, the UN claim the situation is the worst in 25 years.

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The ministry of Agriculture said that the insects that consume a big part of the vegetation are a threat to the fragile food security of Somalia.

And, there are some fears that the situation may get out of control before the harvest starts in April.

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Neighboring Kenya hasn't witnessed a locust threat as serious in 70 years, claims the UN FAO.

Somalia is the first country in the region which declared an emergency because of the infestation.

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What's Being Done to Fight Off the Locusts?

Because of the unstable security situation in Somalia, planes can't be used to treat the insects from the air.

The FAO has called for international assistance in fighting off these swarms in the Horn of Africa and warned that the numbers could grow 500 times by June.

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The swarms spread into the east of Africa from Yemen across the Red Sea after a heavy fall of rain in late 2019.

This rain made the ideal conditions for insects to thrive.

Locusts are able to travel up to 150 km per day and every adult insect can consume its own weight in food daily.

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If the outbreak isn't controlled and breeding conditions flourish, the UN claims it can affect 30 countries in Africa and Asia.

According to the East Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development, spraying, which is expensive and dangerous in places where militants operate, has covered only less than one third of the impacted areas.

And, spraying in grazing areas is quite challenging because days may pass before livestock is moved out of the way.

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Not the First Major Locust Outbreak

A locust outbreak in the north of Africa happened between 2003 and 2005 and the cost for putting it under control was almost $600 million, as well as additional $90 million in food aid that was

distributed in the affected nations.

According to the UN, the losses from the infestation were around $2.5 billion.

Sources:

BBC

WSJ

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