



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND LAND REFORM

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MEDIA RELEASE

UPDATE ON THE BROWN LOCUST INFESTATION IN //KHARAS AND HARDAP REGIONS

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) is hereby updating farmers in the //Kharas and Hardap Region and the public at large on the current brown locust infestation. The country is experiencing fourth wave of the Brown Locusts (BL) infestation affecting grazing land in //Kharas and Hardap Regions.

The first outbreak was reported in November 2021 at Karasburg East Constituency after receiving the onset rainfall of 50-80mm. Thereafter, //Kharas and Hardap Regions have been the breeding zones for brown locust. In 2021, MAWLR established monitoring and control teams in all the 14 regions for effective surveillance, monitoring and control of the outbreaks of the plant pests. The control team was deployed in November 2021 to Karasburg East Constituency //Kharas region to carry out on surveillance, monitoring and control of the brown locust.

To date, the team surveyed a total area of 1.8 million in //Kharas region of which 1.2 million hectares is sporadically infested by the brown locust. In the Hardap Region, the presence of brown locust was detected in Malthohe and Gibeon and a total of 490 hectares was surveyed of which 300 hectares area is sporadically infested.

The locusts in both regions are all at developmental stages of their life cycles, from 1st instar, 2nd instar, 3rd instar and 5TH instar (that is from hatching, hoping to flying stages). Formed bands and swarms are able to fly up to 100km per day depending on the wind velocity.

REMEDIAL ACTIONS TAKEN

- MAWLR has distributed pesticides, mounted vehicle sprayers, protective gears, mistblowers, and camping materials to all the //Karas and Hardap Region for use during this fourth wave infestation;

- To date, MAWLR supported by farmers sprayed 1 094 70 ha whilst 2 119 681 ha area under surveillance and monitoring.
- To intensify the control of brown locust control, a reinforcement team of 23 staff members from other regions were deployed to the //Kharas and Hardap Regions;
- MAWLR initiated awareness campaigns through local radio stations in Hardap and //Kharas Regions to alert farmers on the presence of the pest and protocols involved during the operations;
- The spraying teams are currently on the ground in the two regions (the spraying begins at 03h00am till 10h00am daily and thereafter the teams carry out surveillance and monitoring).

The Ministry hereby requests the farmers to open up their farm gates to allow the teams to have full access to the infested areas, as spraying from outside the fences does not yield any positive and conclusive results. Further, the motorists in //Kharas and Hardap Regions are requested to drive cautiously when approaching locusts on the road surface to avoid any possible accidents. It is therefore important that the community in //Kharas and Hardap Regions and the public at large are urged to continue reporting locust infestations at MAWLR regional offices or any nearby Government Offices.

The community of //Kharas and Hardap Regions are urgent to report any present of locusts to Ms. Johanna Amakali for Hardap Control Team on 0811700131, Mr. Nelson Ngatjizemo for //Kharas Control Team 0811560544 and Ms. Paulina Shilunga, National Coordinator on 0812164073.

Issued by:

Ndiyakupi Nghituwamata (Ms)
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Foot Notes:

- *The Ministry has managed to survey 2 119 681 hectares nationally, no presence of locust reported in all regions except //Kharas and Hardap regions;*
- *A total of 384 farmers and 58 technical staff were trained on the eLocust3m mobile phone application for surveillance, monitoring and mapping of the affected areas in all 14 regions;*
- *MAWLR capacitated 739 (419 male, 320 female) farmers and stakeholders on ecology, biology, life cycle, safe handling of pesticides and management strategies of locust nationally;*
- *MAWLR distributed 56 smartphones and 40 tablets intensify for surveillance, Monitoring and timely reporting countrywide.*