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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**MINISTER DIDIZA UPDATES THE NATION ON THE OUTBREAK OF BROWN LOCUST  
(LOCUSTANA PARDALIN) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**7 APRIL 2022**

South Africa is experiencing brown locust outbreak since September 2021. The outbreak is in three provinces of the country; namely Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces. Due to the amount of rainfall received, the outbreak tends to escalate, and this resulted in the development of new generation after the other.

This locust outbreak is the highest in decades as continuous rain is falling in the Karoo and nearby areas. The wind is also playing a role in migrating the swarms to the areas where it was never been such as the garden route area in the Western Cape and in citrus farms of Kirkwood and Patensie in the Eastern Cape. It had affected the veld, grazing lands, crops, roads, railway lines and further reported in towns and residential areas.

There are ground teams appointed to control the locusts in the three provinces. 1200 controllers are appointed, and two helicopters are currently doing the aerial spraying, mostly on inaccessible areas and where there are huge locust outbreaks.

To date the department has spent more than R80 million in the locust control program and most of the funds have been spend on the procurement of insecticide, including the spraying pumps, protective clothing, payments to controllers and aerial spraying.

The Western Cape Province has contributed R5 million to assist in the locust control programme. They have procured insecticide, protective clothing and spray pumps. The department has established Joint Operation Committee (JOC) that meet once a week to discuss locust control issues. The participants include the department, Agricultural Research Council, Free State province and Eastern and Western Cape provinces, Northern Cape and organised agriculture.

To date the Registrar has assisted by registering new insecticide to be produced for the control of brown locust as well as the registration of BAYER's Decis to be used for aerial spraying as it was originally used for ground control to alleviate the insecticide shortage for both ground and aerial control.

In addition the department has procured insecticides, spray pumps and protective clothing and distributed them to the locust control contractors. The distribution of insecticide depends on the locust outbreak area to be controlled.



Currently the locust outbreak is in mix stages with more flyers confined to eastern districts due winds especially around the border of three provinces, Eastern, Western and Northern Cape. The current aerial spraying is within that area. There are new development due continuous rains received in the area. There are flyers also coming from Namibia in the western locust districts.

**Areas affected by locust outbreak are as follows:**

Northern Cape – 33 districts affected (Britstown, Carnarvon, De Aar, Griekwastad, Groblershoop, Hopetown, Kenhardt, Netherlea, Loxton, Marydale, Kakamas, Petrusville, Prieska, Upington, Victoria West, Vosburg, Phillipstown, Hanover, Niekerkshoop, Douglas, Richmond, Springbok, Aggeneys, Pofadder, Pella, Witbank, Askham, Bladgrond, Calvinia Wes, Dwaalhoek, Kakamas, Koupan, Langklip, Nounieput, Olifantshoek and Sutherland).

Eastern Cape -13 districts affected (Aberdeen, Graaf Reinet, Somerset East, Pearston, Willowmore, Jansenville, Rietbron, Stytlerville, Cradock and Middleburg) and newly affected areas such as Kirkwood, Uitenhage and Patensie).

Western Cape – 6 districts affected (Murraysburg, Beaufort West, Prince Albert, Merweville, Laingsburg) and new affected areas such Calitzdorp, Ladismith and Oudtshoorn).

**PROGRESS TO DATE**

**Aerial Spraying**

The huge swarms of flyers are currently in Eastern districts, bordering the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape. The aerial spraying is currently in those areas.

Northern Cape – 15000 hectres (ha) sprayed in Britstown, Loxton, Kenhardt, Groblershoop, Upington, and Kakamas

Eastern Cape – 11581 hectares (ha) sprayed in Middleburg, Aberdeen, Stytlerville, Jansenville, Patensie and Wolwefontein.

Western Cape – 8000 hectares (ha) sprayed Murraysburg, Prince Albert, and Merweville.

Over the borders of three provinces – 6 000ha

**Ground teams**

The ground teams are continuing with their control in all areas of the three provinces as mixed types hoppers are being observed including swarms of flyers. There are some new locust outbreaks areas and controllers are activated immediately

Northern Cape – 375 290 hectares (ha) controlled

Western Cape – 16 000 hectares (ha) controlled

Eastern Cape – 22000 hectares (ha) controlled

The Minister would like to call upon members of the public to assist by notifying our nearest district offices of the affected provincial departments of Agriculture if they spot these locusts. Members of the public can also report to the following officials of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development: Ms Vuyokazi Jongwana: 0847608176 and Ms Mulalo Matodzi: 0833267773.

**-END-**



Issued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:

- Media Liaison Officer and Spokesperson: Mr Reggie Ngcobo, 066 298 0980 or MLO.Minister@dalrrd.gov.za.
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