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Voluntary _ Public

Date: 2/21/2017

GAIN Report Number:

Bolivia

Post: Lima

Locust Attack in Santa Cruz

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

A locust attack in Santa Cruz devastated around 1,500 hectares of agricultural land. Locust swarms of up to 10 kilometers long and traveling up to 100 kilometers per day, has spread quickly destroying fields of corn, sorghum, and other crops. Producer associations estimate more than 1,500 hectares of agricultural land have been devastated by the locusts.

General Information:

Following a severe drought in 2016, a locust plague is affecting Santa Cruz, Bolivia's agricultural powerhouse and responsible for 80 percent of the country's agricultural production. Locust swarms of up to 10 kilometers long and traveling up to 100 kilometers per day spread quickly, destroying fields of corn, sorghum, and other crops. Producer associations estimate more than 1,500 hectares of agricultural land have been devastated by the locusts. A locust swarm can consume sufficient food to feed 2,500 people per day.



According to media reports, the lack of response in the early stages of this emergency led to the replacement of the agricultural sanitary authority (SENASAG) by the Minister of Rural Development and Land. The new authority declared Santa Cruz in sanitary emergency and has begun an aggressive fumigation campaign by air. The government of Bolivia has devoted an initial \$700,000 to control this plague. So far, approximately 33,000 hectares have been fumigated.

To put the overall impact of this event into perspective, Bolivia's total area planted to soybean, corn, wheat, sunflower and sorghum is approximately 1.5 million hectares, making the damaged area equivalent to less than one percent.

Reportedly, locust migrated to Bolivia from Argentina, according to the press. In early 2016, Argentina suffered the worse locust attack in sixty years, affecting 700,000 hectares. Both, Argentina and FAO have announced they will send experts to assist Bolivia to mitigate the attack.