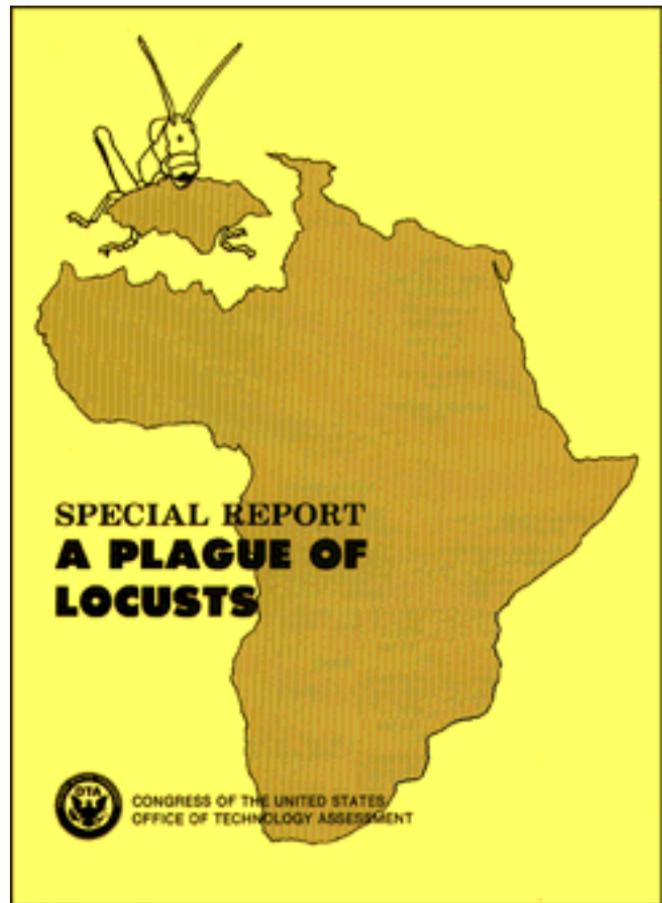


Plague of Locusts—Special Report

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Foreword

Widespread outbreaks of grasshoppers, then plagues of locusts, occurred in some parts of Africa from 1985 through 1989. Donors, including the United States, mobilized sizable amounts of foreign aid for disaster assistance. Congress played a role throughout the insect upsurges, appropriating special funds for disaster assistance.

Congress also had broader concerns regarding a number of environmental problems throughout Africa that seemed related to the locust and grasshopper situation. The Senate Appropriations Committee and its Subcommittee on Foreign Operations requested that OTA address a number of questions regarding how U.S. foreign aid dollars were spent during the recent plague: Was insect control timely and effective? What were the impacts on donors long-term development efforts? What should the United States do when the problem recurs?

This is OTA's fifth report on U.S. foreign aid and African agriculture and our most detailed look at one specific problem. Here, we provide background on the unusual nature of grasshopper and locust problems, examine the implications this has for the way problems are treated, then consider how U.S. contributions to the bilateral and multilateral control effort might be improved. We identify two areas of technology-integrated pest management and insect, weather, and vegetation monitoring—that could have important impacts. We include specific ways in which Congress could ensure that such improvements are made.

Like all OTA studies, this special report draws on many people's expertise. We appreciate the efforts of our workshop participants, the people who responded to our survey, and those who reviewed the two draft reports. In particular, our thanks go to staff at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). OTA, USAID, and FAO'S analyses and policy suggestions sometimes differ. But we at OTA are grateful for the assistance these other groups provided and the thoroughness with which they reviewed our early work.



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Dedication

OTA dedicates this report to the memory of S.M. Moobola, Director, International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa, in Zambia, who died in mid-1989, and to Gladys Gilbert, USAID, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, who was killed in the 1989 plane crash of Congressman Mickey Leland's delegation. Both took part in this work. We hope that it reflects the same ideals of public service and global cooperation that they embodied.