People-Centered Early Warning
Rural communities against desert locusts

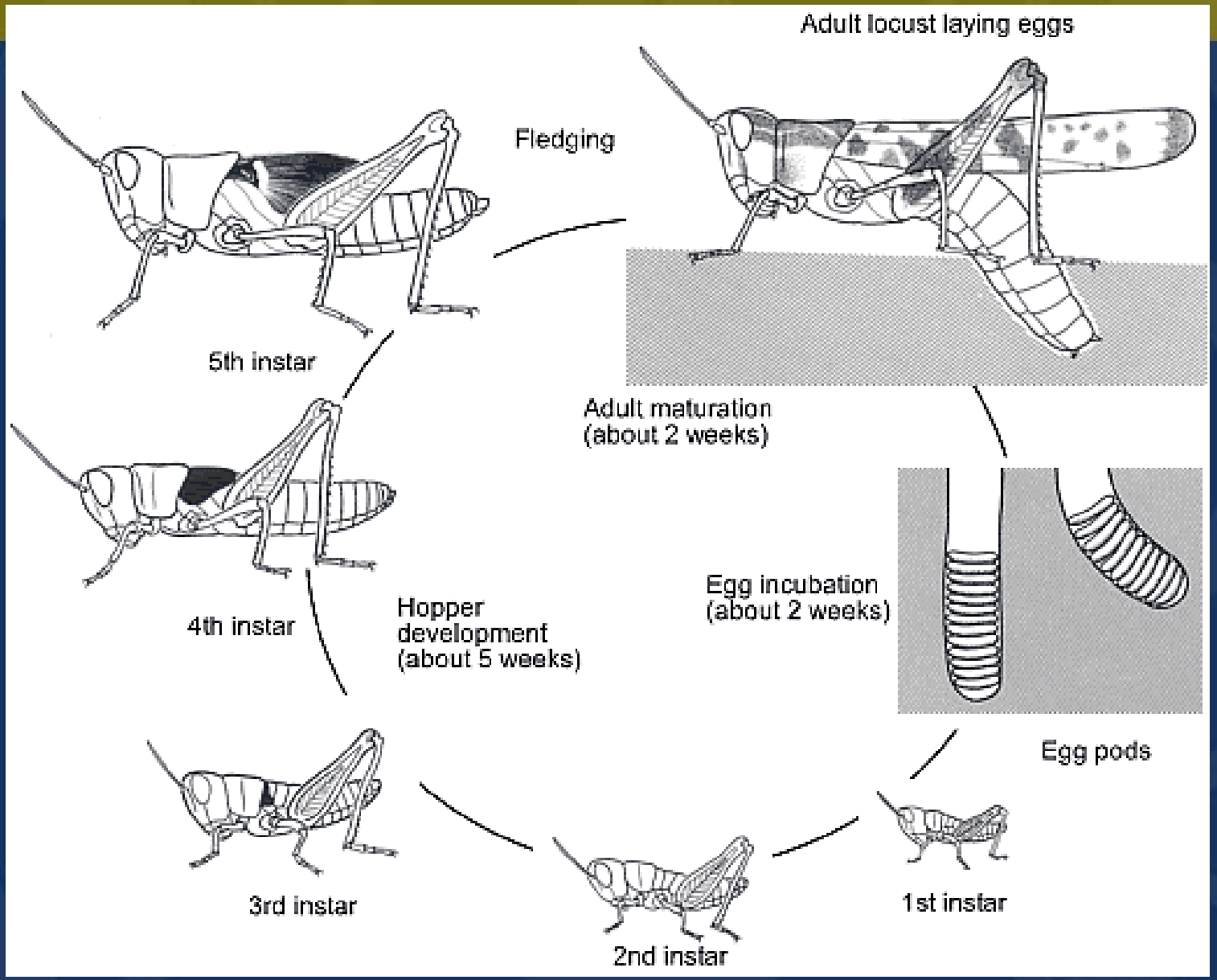
U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization
Global Information and Early Warning System

World Conference on Disaster Reduction
Kobe-Hyogo, January 2005

Desert Locust Phenomenon

- Ancient and well-known
- Foreseeable (not predictable)
- Complex, but verifiable
- First FAO warnings in October 2003
- Threat to main season: May- October 2004

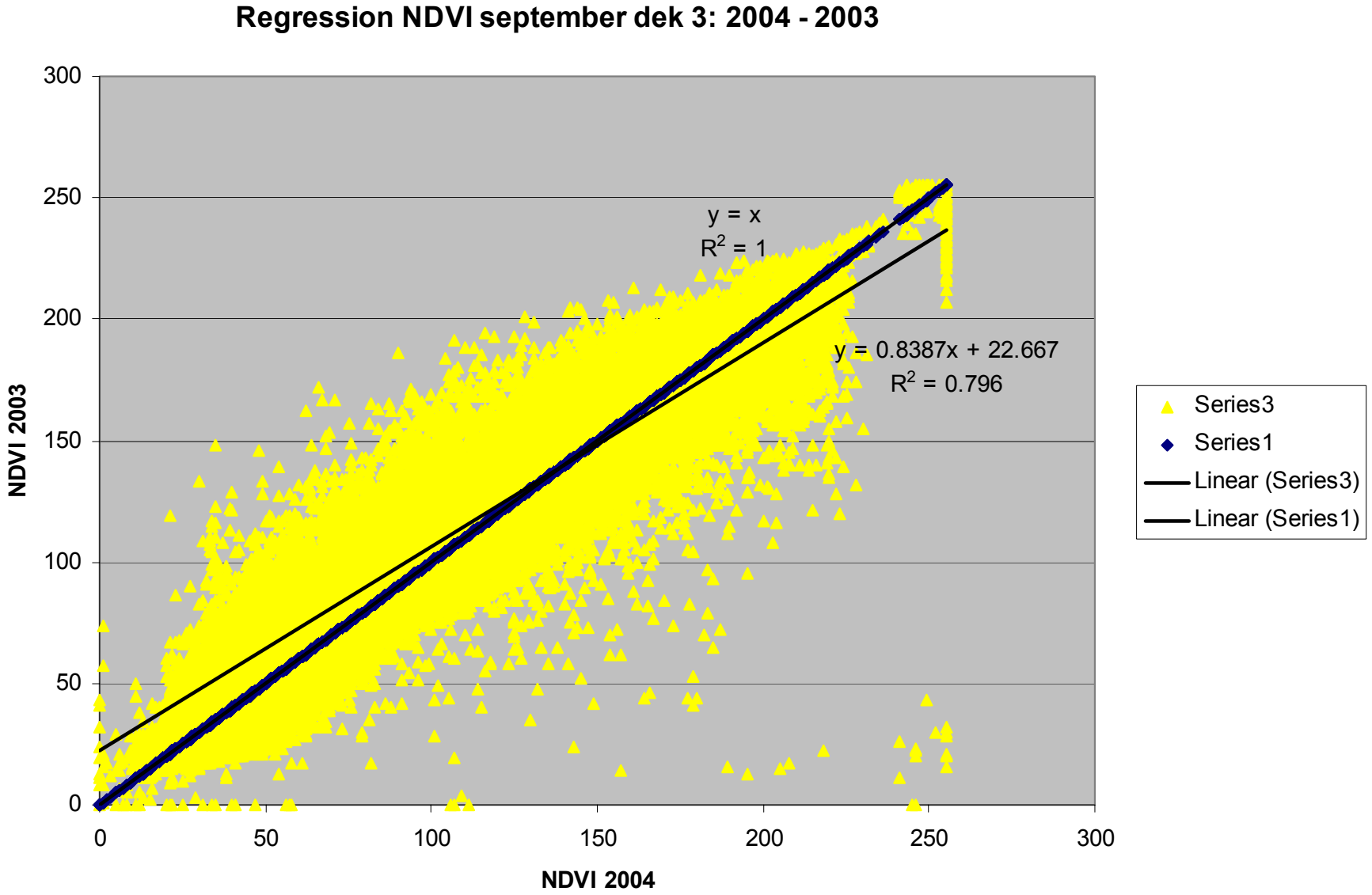
Desert Locust Lifecycle

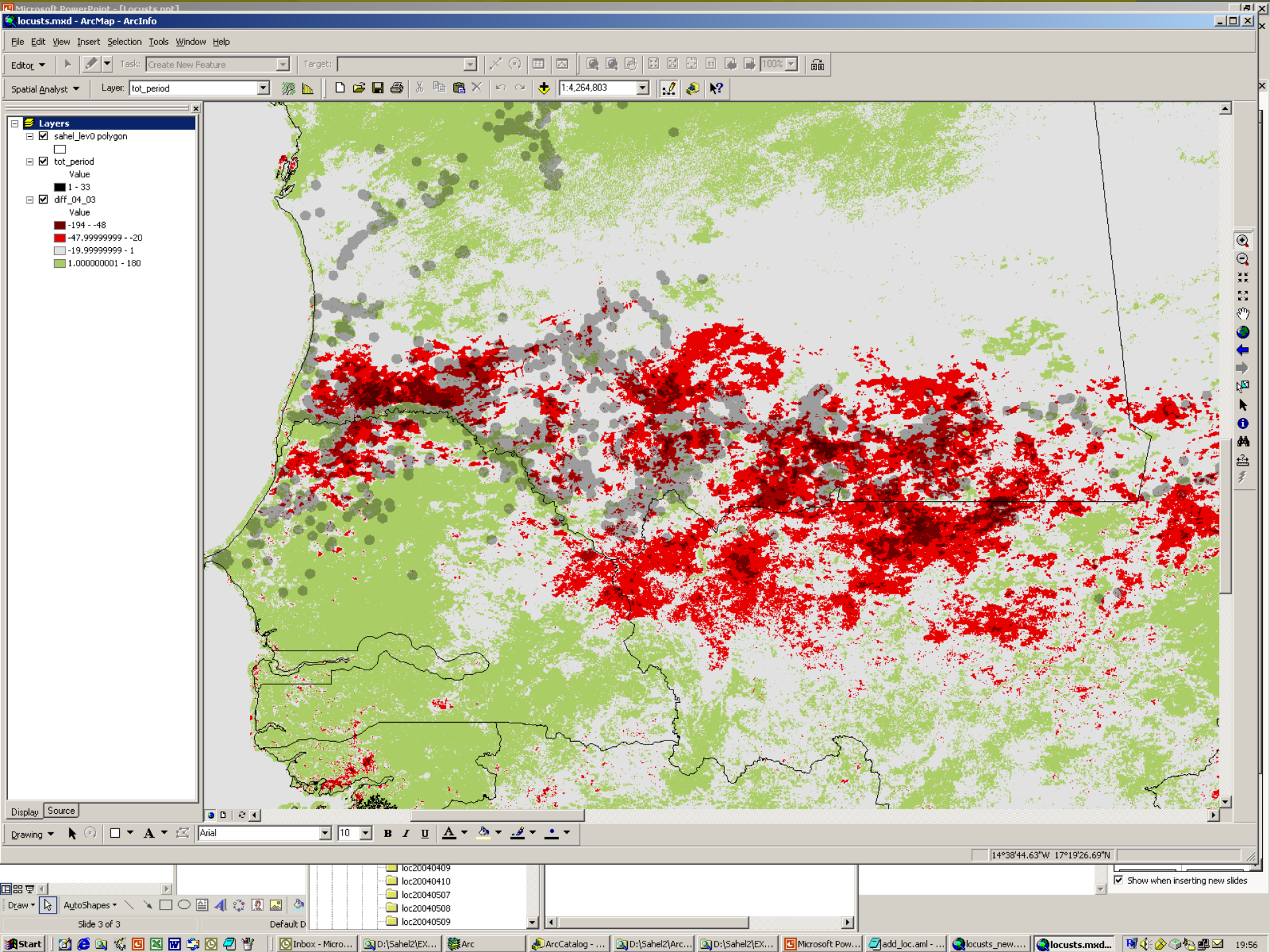


Sahel: a season of Mixed Results

- Weather, other climatic factors, critical
- Correlation locusts/vegetation, moisture
- 2004: drier in arid areas, wetter in humid zones
- Little overall impact on regional grain production
- **Very large impact** on ecosystems and populations in drier areas (pastoral and marginal agricultural systems)

Comparison 2003-2004

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2004 Summary

- Wide differences between northern and southern areas of the Sahel
- Severe disruption of northern pastoral systems, marginal agriculture
- Early and problematic transhumance to southern zones
- Emergency human migration to southern areas
- Localized, but severe crises

2004 Issues

- Early Warning unheeded for some time
- Difficult to sustain institutions dealing with infrequent crises
- Inefficiency, cost, of late action
- Little access to heterogeneous, often unusable data on DL
- Wide differences in information collection systems across and within countries of the Sahel, NW Africa

National Institutions, Rural Communities (1)

- National information systems: adequate for agricultural information, but
- Do not extend to information collection, analysis, on desert locusts

National Institutions, Rural Communities (2)

Detailed knowledge not harnessed, not supported:

- Limited geographical scope and technical usefulness of data
- Lost opportunities to enlist communities in early warning, countermeasures

Toward more people-centered EW?

- **Technical information for general EW is available**
- **More precise data needed for analysis, forecasting, documenting extent of threat, mobilizing resources**
- **Need better mix of ‘high-tech’ and local resources (institutions and, especially, rural communities) – will require investments in HR**