

Kenyans face danger from aflatoxin contamination in crops, biotechnology can mitigate problem

Most Kenyans are at high risk of aflatoxin contamination due to lack of monitoring and evaluation on the harvested and produced crops, says Dr. Charity Mutegi of Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). Mutegi disclosed that the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)-a State agency for quality maintenance, tests a negligible percentage of national crops.

She further adds that aflatoxin gets introduced in the country from imported foods across Kenya's neighbours. "This is a problem that lies squarely with the KEBS and the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service that have failed to act on individuals who take advantage of the porosity of Kenya's borders," she said.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, 25 percent of the world food crop and a higher percentage of the world animal feedstuffs are contaminated by mycotoxins. Dr. Julius Maina – food microbiologist and biotechnologist, aflatoxin is one cause of the contamination that is world over. He noted that aflatoxin has far reaching health effects which include cancer complications, mutagenicity, teratogenic (birth defects), and kidney and nervous disorders among others human health risks.

In Kenya for instance, control of aflatoxin contamination in maize is dependent upon the development and introduction of germplasm resistance to growth of aflatoxin species and biosynthesis of toxics by these species. Scientifically, availability of *A.oryzae* whole genome sequence, a close relative of *A. flavus*, used in industrial fermentation for enzyme production without aflatoxin, could help in mitigating aflatoxin dangers.

Read the full, original article: [Kenyans still at risk of aflatoxin contamination](#)