

Swaziland embracing GM cotton

Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jabulani Mabuza has challenged local farmers to embrace genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and apply the technology to maximise their produce.

The minister was speaking during the launch the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) Global Report on the status of commercialised biotech/GM crops at Mountain Inn on Wednesday. In his speech, the minister noted that farmers were risk takers as they relied on rains to grow their crops.

“I am happy that amongst us we have farmers who use faith as they produce crops. They rely on the weather updates issued by the Meteorological Services. They plant with the belief that it will rain,” he said. Mabuza said Swazis should not shy away from this technology, but should embrace and learn more about GMOs and apply the technology. Over 20 countries around the world are using this technology with only three in Africa.

... Swaziland seems to be adapting to technology as farmers have taken an initiative to produce genetically modified cotton.

The Swaziland Cotton Board has already filed an application with the Swaziland Environment Authority (SEA), as the competent authority mandated to handle these issues, to bring the genetically modified cotton seeds into the country.

The cotton will be brought in strictly for confined trial purposes and farmers are warned that it is against the law to use the seeds for other purposes.

This will be the first GMO (genetically modified organisms) to be imported into the country for production and if it is approved, it will be open to other farmers to produce. The permit is yet to be approved by the SEA.

“At the moment, there has not been much activity when it comes to biotech crops in the country, but I am aware that the National Biosafety Advisory Committee (NBAC) has been reviewing an application from the Swaziland Cotton Board to conduct confined field trials and the committee is on the verge of finalising the review and assessment of sites where the trials will be conducted.

Read the full, original article: [Minister encourages farmers to grow GMO crops](#)