

Kenyan government should allow science to guide GMO policy

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Long-term pesticide and chemical misuse has harmed and continues to harm our environment. They have harmed the soils and killed pollinating insects, which are necessary for productivity of most of our cropping systems. The Bt-crops were designed as an answer to that. The Government, guided by basic scientific reality, can make up its mind to allow Kenyan farmers to embrace this now old technology for increased food security.

Quality seed varieties have always been bought or distributed by Governments. That is why we have Kenya Seed Company. Whereas the concern about germ plasm loss is genuine and that some of the indigenous crop varieties with useful traits could be lost, the answer lies in investing in research in biodiversity.

The Kenya Genetic Resources Institute should be capacitated to serve as a repository for plant, animal and microbial germ plasm for the country. Kenyans should also stop encroaching on biodiversity hotspots to avoid genetic erosion. The Government needs to invest the promised 2 per cent of the GDP in research to support more infrastructure and human capacity development in emerging sciences.

It will in future cost less than US\$200 to sequence a genome. Most of the information about organisms will be housed in genome databases. We need an army of our young minds trained in science to be able to understand and harness this information to drive a bio-economy.

Scientists and the National Biosafety Authority must lay the facts as they are. Insect Resistant Maize varieties fortified with Bt-toxin and drought tolerance genes are safe. Chemical pesticides are unsafe to us and the environment, and we should reduce their use. Let us stop the fear mongering.

Read full, original post: [Science should inform GMO debate](#)