How Europe is starving Africa by blocking GMOs

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It is estimated that Africa imports nearly 83 per cent of its food. I argue that Africa can feed itself in a generation. However, efforts to achieve this continue to be frustrated by policies adopted by Africa's historical trading partners, especially the European Union.

There are at least three ways in which EU policies affect Africa's ability to address its agricultural and food challenges: tariff escalation; technological innovation and food export preferences.

EU policy undermines African agricultural innovation in the field of genetically modified (GM) crops. The EU exercises its right not to cultivate transgeniccrops but only to import them as animal feed. However, its export of restrictive policies on GM crops has negatively affected Africa.

Africa's needs are different from those of the EU. There are uniquely African problems where GM should be considered as an option. Consider Uganda and Nigeria.

Xanthomonas banana wilt costs Uganda's Great Lakes region nearly US $500m annually in losses. There is no treatment for the disease, which continues to undermine food security.

Ugandan scientists have developed a GM approach but their efforts to further their research in the technology are hampered by opposition to it. Critics advocate the adoption of an EU biosafety rules that would effectively stall the adoption of the technology. In fact, some of opponents using scare tactics against the technology are EU-based non-governmental organizations.

The moth *Maruca vitrata* destroys about US $300 million worth of blackeyed peas in Nigeria. The country is forced to import pesticides worth US $500m annually to control the pest. Nigerian scientists have developed a *Maruca*-resistant, GM blackeyed pea, but policy makers fear clashing with the EU.

Read full, original post: How the EU starves Africa into submission