

South Africa to ease restrictions on GMO corn imports as drought affects maize crops

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

South Africa will relax some of its tough rules on genetically modified (GM) crops so it can ramp up maize imports from the United States and Mexico to avert a potential food crisis amid a severe drought, officials said.

Almost 90 percent of maize in South Africa is genetically modified and the country bans commodities with strains not approved by the government and does not allow imports to be stored, stipulating they must be transported immediately from ports to mills.

Makenosi Maroo, spokeswoman at the Department of Agriculture, told Reuters that the government planned to permit importers to temporarily store consignments of GM maize at pre-designated facilities, to allow much bigger import volumes.

“In anticipation of the volumes expected to be imported into South Africa, the (GMO) Executive Council has approved the adjustment of a permit condition which relates to the handling requirement,” Maroo said.

“There is therefore no intention to relax safety assessment or risk management procedures prescribed.”

. . . .

The worst drought in a century has scorched vast swathes of croplands, affecting around 2.7 million homes in Africa’s most advanced economy where shortages of white maize – a staple food for the black majority – could reach crisis proportions by October if expected summer rains do not fall, analysts say.

. . . .

South African maize producers called for much more far-reaching rule changes to cope with the situation. Maroo said the government was also considering applications to register additional GMO varieties that would boost maize trade between the United States and South Africa.

Read full, original post: [SA to Ease Some GM Crop Rules to AVERT Food Crisis](#)