# Tanzania kick starts GMO era with field trial of drought-tolerant GMO maize

Tanzania planted its first genetically modified maize research trials [Oct. 5] under an initiative that is building a new model for advancing agricultural innovation through public-private partnerships.

The confined field trial, a pre-cursor to commercialization, will demonstrate the effectiveness and safety of a drought-tolerant GM maize hybrid developed by the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project.

Some 300 million Africans depend on maize as their main food source, but the crop is frequently harmed by drought, leading to hunger, poverty and human suffering. WEMA, a pioneering initiative that pools NGO, corporate and philanthropic resources, seeks to reduce crop failure by developing conventional and GM maize hybrids for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

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…Despite political constraints in Africa, WEMA moved forward with biotechnology because it “offered the promise to add still greater drought tolerance to the already improved [conventional] hybrids, resulting in an even more substantial gain for drought tolerant maize,” according to a case study authored by the WEMA partners. “Scientifically, the optimal approach was to use both techniques together.”

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However, anti-GMO activists do not in support this agricultural advancement in Tanzania and have urged the public to protest the government’s issuance of the CFT permit.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** Tanzania plants its first GMO research crop