

Why Ugandan farmers are blocked from growing biotechnology crops

Editor's Note: This article, written by crop scientists Micheal Otim, discusses a recent print article called "MPs who visited Namulonge fields did not get clear picture", published in the New Vision of December 24, 2016.

The writer questioned the capacity and qualifications of Members of Parliament to learn and understand issues surrounding biotechnology and genetic engineering so that they can correctly decide on the pending Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill. The writer, a university don, questions whether the honourable MPs have the capacity to discern what a good scientific experiment should constitute and attempts to discredit the MPs' learning tour and other such engagements with researchers, on biotechnology, as efforts at "conversion".

Apparently, the writer is opposed to anyone seeking to know more about biotechnology or genetic engineering- a component of the former.

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In Uganda, several biotechnology products have either been developed or are still in the pipeline. Unfortunately, Ugandans cannot yet use these products because we need a law to regulate the biotechnology used to develop them and ensure that products are safe for consumption ... Therefore, it's surprising for a scientist to insinuate that the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) is an employer of "science crooks" and yet NARO has openly invited member of the public, including MPs, students, clergymen, farmers, and those opposed to biotech to learn about these products and solutions they offer to crop problems.

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NARO does public research, not in secrecy, but under the strict supervision of bodies such as UNCST and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Since its establishment, NARO scientists have developed hundreds of improved varieties of crops including cassava, rice beans, maize, and banana to help raise farmers' incomes.

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The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why Ugandans Don't need more lies about biotechnology](#)