

## Nigeria's approval of GMO cowpea signals Africa's willingness to embrace biotech crops

Nigeria is on the path to becoming the first country to cultivate biotech cowpea after the country's biosafety agency granted approval for open cultivation by farmers. The [National Biosafety Management Agency \(NBMA\)](#) permitted the [Institute for Agricultural Research \(IAR\)](#)....to commercially release Pod Borer-Resistant Cowpea (PBR Cowpea).

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The crop is genetically improved to resist lepidopteran insect pest *Maruca vitrata*, an insect that can cause up to 80 percent yield loss. This development makes cowpea the first genetically modified (GM) food crop to be approved for open cultivation in the West African nation ....

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In an exclusive interview with *The DrumBeat*, the project's Principal Investigator Prof. Mohammad Ishayaku gives a detailed account of his experiences during the product development pipeline and offers valuable lessons and advice to African policy makers and fellow researchers leading similar projects....

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### **What does the approval mean for Nigeria and Africa at large?**

It really means a lot for Nigeria. It means Nigerians can independently think and choose based on scientific evidence aligned against economic benefits that might come with any technology. The approval provides the Nigerian society a prime opportunity to apply any form of technology, not only biotechnology.....This development also shows that....Africa....has the ability to decide for herself what is good for her population.

Read full, original article: [PROF. ISHAYAKU: NIGERIA'S APPROVAL OF BT COWPEA SIGNIFIES AFRICA'S CAPACITY TO ADOPT BIOTECH CROPS](#)