

Kenya GMO insect-resistant Bt cotton approval exposes ‘missed opportunity’ for neighboring Uganda

Kenya has made history as it joined six other African countries in commercial cultivation of BT cotton.

Peter Munya, the country’s Agriculture Cabinet Secretary planted the first BT cotton seed with farmers at Alupe University College, Busia County, on March 09, leaving behind Uganda that first carried out the study on the crop, more than a decade ago.

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The planting in Busia marks the first of 1,000 on-farm demonstration plots to be planted in 23 counties for training at least 40,000 farmers prior to full commercial roll-out countrywide.

BT cotton has been improved with the ability to resist the African bollworm, the single most destructive cotton pest With BT cotton, Kenyan farmers are expected to enjoy a four-fold reduction in production cost.

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Back in Uganda, Isaac Ongu, the executive director at the Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development told *The Independent* that Kenya’s move to fast track BT cotton growing leaves Uganda at a disadvantage “I do not see how we can avoid the apparels produced from the Kenyan BT cotton like it is with the apparels produced in India,” he said.

Barbra Zawedde, a coordinator at the Uganda Biosciences Information Centre earlier told *The Independent* that growing BT cotton was a missed opportunity for Uganda.

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