

## US, Kenya free-trade agreement could end run African nation's 'entrenched' anti-GMO interests

Anti-biotech activists and sentiment are entrenched throughout Africa, but U.S. farm groups and businesses are hoping a free-trade agreement with Kenya will help the country break through its GMO barriers and provide an example to other nations of what the science can do for farmers and food security.

The U.S., home to an agriculture sector that heavily depends on biotechnology to produce soybeans, corn, cotton and sugar, announced on March 18 that it would begin negotiating an FTA with the East African country that still bans the technology despite a growing interest in using it.

Many African countries still look to Europe, with its open distrust of genetically modified food, as a policy role model, but desires to use biotechnology are gaining ground in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya.

And Kenya, for its part, appears ready to take on the role. Scientists there have been developing genetically modified crops to fight off disease, pests and survive drought conditions for years, but the ban and the strength of activists have been holding the country back.

Biotech advocates are now hoping that will all soon change as the East African country draws closer to cementing new ties with the U.S.

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