

Kenya distributes 16.3 metric tons of GM BT insect-resistant cotton seed to farmers, despite 'deliberate campaign' against biotech crops

The Kenyan government has given 16.3 metric tonnes of genetically modified cotton seeds to farmers in the eastern region. The seeds will be distributed to farmers in Kitui, Makueni, Machakos, Embu, Meru, Kirinyaga, Tharaka Nithi, Laikipia and Taita Taveta counties for the short rains season, according to cabinet secretary for agriculture Peter Munya.

Farmers in the Western region of Busia, Bungoma, Kisumu and Siaya Counties also received seeds for the long rains season, Munya said.

He said the journey towards commercialisation of Bt cotton has been long and tedious, with a myriad of challenges, including misunderstanding, suspicion and a deliberate campaign to discredit the benefits to be derived from actualising its production.

On March 9, the government launched the process of testing Bt cotton seed for commercial production in Alupe University College in Busia county.

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The government will procure and distribute Bt cotton seed and pesticides to 23 counties suitable for cotton production during fiscal 2020-21.

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