

## Viewpoint: Uganda's 'mistrust of science' threatens local farming innovation and economic growth

Uganda is merely watching as other countries embrace technologies such as biotechnology that are transforming agriculture and earning them huge economic benefits.

Our government through the National Agricultural Research Organisation (Naro) is conducting research aimed at overcoming pests and diseases that are wiping out crops such as banana, cassava, sweet potato, Irish potato among others.

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Naro has achieved some success and has come up with crop varieties that are either tolerant or resistant to such challenges as drought stress and disease.

Yet Ugandan farmers cannot access the crop varieties for planting because the government is hesitant to pass the Biotechnology and Bio-safety Bill 2012 which was formulated to put into operation the National Biotechnology and Bio-safety Policy 2008.

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Ironically our universities are training young people in biotechnology and the government continues to fund Naro's GM research activities without taking advantage of the research findings.

Meanwhile other countries such as India, Sudan, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Canada and USA, and a whole range of others are growing biotech crops and reaping benefits.

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