

Viewpoint: Cost of misinformation — Nigeria spends over 40 million dollars a year importing cowpea. A GMO insect resistant version could save money and lives

Even though Nigeria is the largest producer of Cowpea, popular known as beans globally, it is still encountering a huge consumption deficit of over 500,000 tonnes, which is usually bridged through importation from neighboring countries.

Nigeria spends at least N16 billion [almost 40 million USD] annually on the importation of cowpea. Beans farmers have been struggling with how to tackle the dangerous Maruca Vitrata, a pod borer insect that destroys the seed. They have to spray pesticides about 10 times on their farms each planting season to combat this deadly pest.

In 2019, the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) approved the Pod Borer Resistant cowpea that was developed by the Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR) at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, with the support of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) to stop the pest from infecting and destroying more than 80 percent of cowpea production.

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The new variety was endorsed to help farmers spray less pesticide, increase yield, reduce poverty, and foster economic transformation in the country.

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The new PBR cowpea promises to bridge the huge gap in beans production and help Nigeria save over N48 billion [over 115.5 million USD] yearly. Therefore, it is crucial to dispel public fear, and help them to understand that GM crops are highly regulated.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here](#)