

Viewpoint: Part I — Behind the anti-crop biotechnology crusade in Nigeria and across Africa

Before any GM crop is released, it is intensively analysed for human, animal and environment safety. Despite their historical high safety record and popularity with farmers there are diverse groups of people opposed to biotechnology and GM crops.

One group is made of apostles dedicated to organic farming. They don't use any chemicals, fertilizer or pesticides, and are often highly opposed to commercial agriculture. This group is also opposed to seed and chemical companies. They advocate a return to the old way of farming, which is according to them the only sustainable way of farming and safeguarding the environment.

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However, faced with a total lack of scientific evidence to back up their arguments, their main weapon consists of made-up stories carefully designed and packaged in such a way to mislead and scare the public.

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The network of Anti GMO activists covers the African continent where they have been very active; and the terrain looks favorable for them for three main reasons. Firstly, the majority of the people did not have formal education.

Second, even among people with university degrees, many do not have the necessary background in modern molecular genetics and biotechnology to discern the fallacies in the stories proagated by the Anti GMO activists.

The third reason is the dependence of many African governments on Foreign Aid. This provides a leverage for EU countries to put tremendous pressure on African governments not to adopt GM crops.

[Editor's note: This is part one of a series. Read [part two](#) and [part three](#), [part four](#), and [part five](#) here.]

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