

Year End Message from the Director General

The key priority for our association during the past year was the engagement on emerging policy issues related to pesticides being debated as **Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)**, their discussion as **Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs)**, as well as their discussions related to the **health of pollinators and in particular honey bees**. In March and June, the **International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)** published monographs related to pesticides and triggered a global public debate that glyphosate and other widely used pesticides cause cancer and therefore should be banned. Several country ministers and governments reacted to this IARC classification by imposing use or sales restrictions for glyphosate and other products. IARC then released a follow-up report which stated red and processed meats are equally likely to cause cancer, similar to the earlier briefing on pesticides. In this context, it may be worthwhile to remember that a few years ago this same agency concluded and published that among others, mobile cell phones and coffee were also probable cancer inducing agents and rated those agents equal to the pesticides they now covered in the mentioned monographs.



Dr Rudolf Guyer

Our industry is of course used to the fact that such messages are not equally perceived by the unknowing public when something is said about daily consumer items and food or if pesticides are the target. There has been no call for the banning or restricting the use of cell phones, coffee and now red and processed meats. However, based on the IARC publications the call to ban glyphosate and pesticides will continue to be repeated and a growing percentage of the public at large will be convinced that if a WHO related agency declares certain pesticides to be carcinogenic it probably would be the right decision to ban such pesticides. The call for banning will continue despite the fact that credible and trusted institutions and authorities such as the **European Food Safety Agency (EFSA)**, the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the USA** and many other regulatory bodies have issued public statements after the IARC announcement. These government agencies have carefully assessed thousands of studies and reports related to these chemicals before granting their regulatory approval and concluded that these pesticides – if used in line with the authorized use recommendation in agriculture - do not cause cancer and therefore these regulatory bodies will not restrict their use.

The IARC publication has triggered a scientific debate on the difference between hazard and risk assessment. I am not convinced that the two concepts will ever be fully understood by the public and consumers. While the IARC scientists admit to applying their judgment purely on the possible hazard of a substance or agent, EFSA and EPA and most government agencies in charge of regulating pesticides conduct a thorough assessment of the hazard and the possible exposure and resulting risk to man and the environment before a pesticide is allowed for use in agricultural production. However, in my view the distinction between hazard and risk assessment is an enormously difficult subject for easy communication to consumers and the public at large. Personally I prefer to believe in and follow the century old wisdom published by the Swiss scientist Paracelsus back in 1538: *„Alle Dinge sind Gift, und nichts ist ohne Gift; allein die dosis macht, daß ein Ding kein Gift sei.“ (Anything is poison and nothing is without poison; only the dosage makes it that a thing is not poison).*

To my knowledge this century old fundamental toxicological principle has not been challenged or questioned by any reputable toxicological institution or authority ever since.

It is essentially this principle defined by Paracelsus, which is totally negated in the debate on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs). The respective EU legislation on pesticides demands that any pesticide that is known to have endocrine disrupting properties (totally irrespective of the dosage applied and tested) must be phased out at the time of the next registration renewal (cut-off criteria). Again there are plenty of substances including natural substances and food items that are known to have such endocrine disrupting effects and no ban is ever thought of by any regulatory body.

Contrary to those items (food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, etc.) for all registered pesticides these risks have been assessed and maximum dosages have been defined that are well below any measurable negative effect including such potential endocrine disrupting effects. Despite this carefully conducted risk assessment carried out for pesticides and the resulting prudent use of these substances in modern agricultural production systems, there are strong voices demanding the ban of such pesticides, increasingly also outside of Europe.

In addition to the above two policy issues, a much more general debate on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) continues on a global level but is targeted in particular at the developing countries around the world. Despite the rejection of a proposed global phase out of HHPs at the recent **Fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 4)** held in Geneva in September, this call for restriction and banning of HHPs will probably continue. From an industry view point we strongly support the decision taken in Geneva and fully cooperate with ongoing respective efforts also supported by FAO and other stakeholders. We continue to contribute towards improving and harmonizing national regulatory systems in developing countries and thereby support the careful assessment of the risks and benefits of “so called HHPs” on a case-by-case base. If stewardship and responsible use training efforts prove to be insufficient to mitigate potential risks to operators, consumers and the environment, our member companies support to restrict such product uses and even to phase out such products. **However, we strongly advocate that such decisions must be taken by responsible national governments. National authorities are in the best position to carefully weigh the risks against the benefits of the continued use of the “so called HHPs”.** In our view, it is critically important that the interests of local agricultural systems are taken into consideration in such banning decisions. A complete crop protection toolbox – including legally registered pesticides - must continue to be available and permit the economically viable food production for the local population as well as for export markets.

Our industry also continued to support and contribute to **pollinator health initiatives** in the region including sharing information on **Best Management Practices (BMP)** with stakeholders. Like in the case of other policy issues, there continues to be calls for banning of certain products following the EU moratorium in 2013. Currently EU has issued a call for data to be used in reviewing the decision. Our industry is committed to implementing its stewardship programme in collaboration with farmer groups.

In addition to the particular engagement on the above policy issues during 2015, our association continued to be engaged on product stewardship and the fight against counterfeit and illegal products. We have made further progress in conducting new partnership projects especially in the area of stewardship jointly with stakeholders who are interested and engaged in improving the agricultural productivity in Africa and in particular in Sub Saharan countries. As a regular reader of this newsletter you will have seen these reports and will continue to read more about these projects in the coming year.

With these thoughts I wish you a relaxing and enjoyable festive season with your family and friends. I would like to thank you for your interest and support of our association's work over the past year and I look forward to working with you in 2016.

Rudolf Guyer

Director General CropLife Africa Middle East

Project Management Workshop Cape Town

The Global Meeting of the Container Management Project Team that took place in Cape Town, November 16-18, was also attended by 10 National CropLife Associations from our regional network. This group benefited from interactions with all the major global schemes (Canada, USA, Brazil, Argentina, France, Germany, Belgium, New Zealand, etc) that also participated at this event.

Following the global meeting, a half-day meeting was held on November 18 with representatives from these 10 national associations to discuss the way forward regarding the implementation of container collection schemes as well as to standardize and improve upon the cooperation between the regional association and national associations for project acquisition and implementation in general.

With regard to the implementation of national container collection schemes, a strong call was made for the local supply and distribution chain to sustainably fund such schemes and that there should not be a continued reliance and dependency on one-time external project funding. As confirmed by the global participants at the earlier meeting, the best funding mechanism is a voluntary industry contribution in relation to the amount of packaging distributed to a given market. We will continue to explore this option, also in Africa – if possible combined with external kick-start funding. The group was quite confident that in a few years time it should be possible to create sustainably funded collection schemes in the Africa Middle East region.

Regarding the general cooperation for project implementation, the group was shown that our partners for Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects are mostly the same organizations that are present and active in several African countries. These partners expect the same standards and quality of project implementation from CropLife across the various countries.

Implementing a good quality project in one country will have a positive influence for other county associations on similar project assignments in their countries. The group discussed and agreed on ways and processes to ensure that our association's performance will satisfy the project partners' requirements in all countries where we decide to engage in project partnerships. This aspect is particularly relevant as regards the training of the Spray Service Providers (SSPs) which has become one of our leading training programs. In order to ensure the required quality, knowledge and skills of these SSPs, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be finalized and be applicable in all countries.

Rudolf Guyer

Board Meeting in Johannesburg

The Cape Town meeting presented an opportunity to benefit from the presence and attendance of some staff members and the Board met on November 20 in Johannesburg to hold its second regular meeting for the year.

Items discussed at the Board meeting followed the regular agenda and covered the following topics:

- * Financial update for 2015.
- * Budget proposal and approval for 2016.
- * Presentation on global, regional and national association resources.
- * Update on regulatory activities during 2015 with a special feedback from the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 4) in Geneva.
- * Update on ongoing stewardship activities including the participation at the meeting of the Global Container Management Project Team in Cape Town.
- * A special presentation and discussion of the Good Growth Plan of Syngenta.

Rudolf Guyer



Some of the participants at the Board Meeting

Stewardship

Container Management comes to South Africa



The "collection" site in Ceres



The "processing" plant in Bellville



The "end recycled product" at the Bellville plant

In their drive towards the establishment and support of container management schemes in the "developing world", CropLife International selected South Africa to hold their Container Management Project Team Meeting with Programs and the African Pilot Programs. The event took place 16-18 November in Somerset West, close to Cape Town at which 36 participants from 28 countries took part.

The program kicked-off with a field visit to see a collection point in Ceres, which is in the heart of the deciduous fruit industry, followed by a visit to both, a processing and a recycling plant in Bellville.

The real work started the following day at which Rudolf Guyer undertook the Welcome Address of the plenary session. This was followed by:

The CMPT Goals for 2015 & Statistics Review 2014, by Detlef Doehmert.

- Vision 2020 and CMPT goals, by Keith Jones
- GlobalGAP and their role in container management, by Elmé Coetzer, Head of Standards, GlobalGAP

An FAO update on container management in Africa, by Richard Thompson

Communications: Resources available and what is needed at the local level to reinforce the container management program among local CropLife associations, by Will Surman

Prior to the splitting of the two groups, "mature programs" and the "African pilot programs", management of the mature programs undertook a 'snapshot' of each country, which was hugely beneficial to the developing programs.



Representing the Plant Science Industry

In the parallel session, the African pilot programs from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia presented, focusing on the following aspects:

- Background on the project
- Progress during 2015 with emphasis on membership, collection rates, final disposal, end-uses, safety measures, etc.
- Plans and challenges for 2016 / 2017
- Advice to the CMPT on improvements to be made

In their parallel session, the "Mature Programs" covered many technical issues, which have a crosscutting impact on continuous improvement.

During the formal dinner a fond farewell was made to Detlef Doehnert who will be retiring at year-end and who stepped down from the position of chairing the Project Team. The excellent state of the Project Team is a tribute to his leadership as well as the number of pilot projects developed under his watch. He will be sorely missed.

Les Hillowitz



Left: Rudolf Guyer paying tribute to Detlef Doehnert on behalf of CropLife Africa Middle East



Right: Keith Jones paying a fitting farewell to Detlef Doehnert on behalf of CropLife International



Group Photo



Les Hillowitz paying tribute to Walter Jordaan of Myplas for his support in container management in South Africa

Container Management Project Team Meeting

The Container Management Project Team Meeting took place the afternoon of 18 November, following the closure of the 2-day workshop with Mature Programs and the African Pilot Programs.

Tim Cotter assumed the Chair of the Project Team in view of the retirement of Detlef Doehner.

Time was spent on the updated statistics for 2014, which now includes figures for China, also on the “goals for 2016” and the importance of the “pilot projects” in the developing countries, namely in Africa and Asia. Regional updates were provided along the lines:

What went well & what did not Main Challenges Plans for 2016 and beyond.

The feedback on the CLAME inputs was provided to the Board at the meeting on Friday 20 November.

The next face-to-face meeting will take place in Brussels on Friday 8 April, following the IPM / RU and Stewardship meetings on 6—7 April.

Les Hillowitz

CropLife Ghana signs MoU for Container Management Programme

On Friday, 27 November, a memorandum of understanding between CropLife Ghana, represented by its Chairman, Mr. William Kotey, and Wynca Sunshine Agric (a member of CropLife Ghana), represented by its Deputy Director, Mr. Jack Yao, was signed at the CropLife Ghana offices in Accra.

The MoU is a step in the right direction for the container management program being implemented by CropLife Ghana. This agreement is expected to improve the collection of empty pesticide containers across the country. Wynca Sunshine Agric, as part of their collaboration with CropLife Ghana, will be providing 2 standard shredding machines (mobile and stationary shredders) for use in the communities and the Temporary Storage Facility (TSF) of CropLife Ghana respectively. There will also be a face-lift of the wash-bay area of the TSF by Wynca Sunshine Agric, to improve the working environment.

Taking this a step further, all empty pesticide containers collected from across the country, including the Ejura Sekyedumase Pilot Scheme (mostly HDPE) will be processed by CropLife Ghana, triple rinsed again and washed and shredded into flakes before transporting to Wynca Sunshine Agric, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana for recycling. The end products produced from these flakes are pesticide containers and knapsack sprayers.

In partnership with Ghana EPA and the PPRSD/MoFA, CropLife Ghana anticipates increased sensitization amongst importers and farmers on the need for enforcement of the laws regarding empty pesticide containers. Currently, some CropLife Ghana member companies are returning about 20% of their empty containers to the CropLife Ghana TSF for processing at a token fee, and it is the hope of CropLife Ghana that the levels will increase in the coming period.

In spite of this development, CropLife Ghana will continue to explore additional avenues for the recycling of empty of pesticide containers into non-domestic, but essential products for agricultural productivity in Ghana.

Frederick B. Boampong



Mr. William Kotey (left) and Mr. Jack Yao (right) signing the MOU at the CropLife Ghana offices in Accra

Africa Agri Forum : Abidjan Cote d'Ivoire

The Forum took place 26 – 27 November in Abidjan at which more than 300 participants attended from 23 countries of North, West and Central Africa, representing public and private organizations, the FAO, the World Bank, agricultural input suppliers, banks and insurance companies, academia and researchers, lastly, the extension services such as ANADER in Cote d'Ivoire.

The 2-day event was organized under the partnership of the Morocco Phosphates/Fertilizers Industry (Office Chérifien des Phosphates), together with many sponsors to discuss ways to boost agriculture in Africa. It is acknowledged that the continent is facing many challenges, mainly on food security and sovereignty, while huge potentials waiting to be uncovered. A “south-south” cooperation is considered to contribute to improving agricultural productivity and sustainability in Africa.

Discussions & exchanges focused on:

Sharing expertise and best practices of the respective governments, the private sector and civil society on agricultural development programs in Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Gabon

- Defining strategies to bring together public policies and private investment;
- Build alliances and synergies for successful, profitable and sustainable agriculture under the “south-south” cooperation approach.
- Financing with the support of insurance systems, food safety & security, sector modernization, technological innovations, agribusiness, public-private partnerships.

The importance for innovations to support productivity with the responsible use of in ag-inputs, irrigation and mechanization.

The forum confirmed the potential of agriculture in Africa as referred to in the national plans for investment in agriculture in participating countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon and the DRC

Bama Yao



Mr Kouakou K., Deputy Director of the Cabinet, Ministry of Agriculture (Above) chaired the opening ceremony and participated in the panel discussion (Below) following the opening ceremony.



CropLife Mauritius designs a French version of the poster on Triple-Rinsing.

Triple Rinçage et Recyclage des Bidons de Pesticide vides

Suivre ces étapes x3

Vider complètement le contenu du bidon en le plaçant sur le "sprayer" pendant au moins 30 secondes.

1 Remplir le bidon vide à un quart avec de l'eau qu'on utilisera ensuite pour le mélange.

2 Fermer le bidon et secouer vigoureusement pendant 30 secondes.

3 Vider l'eau de rinçage dans le réservoir du "sprayer". Laisser égoutter pendant au moins 30 secondes.

Répéter ces 3 étapes encore 2 fois.

Porter toujours des équipements de protection pendant l'opération.

Protéger votre santé et l'environnement: Percer le bidon pour le rendre inutilisable. Le placer dans les cages pour être recyclé.

CropLife Mauritius has designed a modified version of the poster on Triple Rinsing in French in order to convey more efficiently the various steps involved in the triple rinsing process of used pesticide containers to all farmers, especially those who cannot read English.

The poster was designed from the editable version of the original poster provided by CropLife International. It was then worked out on the software program Photoshop, thus avoiding the additional expense of hiring a professional to do the artwork. The only cost involved was for the printing of the posters.

The distribution of the French version of Triple-Rinse posters is presently ongoing at full swing across Mauritius with the collaboration of the various stakeholders involved with the Container Management Project.

The Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) of the Ministry of Agro-Industry & Security are affixing the posters at their Model Farms, Demonstration Centres, Farmers Training Schools and Sub-offices scattered all over the island. The importers and distributors of pesticides are placing the posters at their retail outlets and also at other shops involved with the sale pesticides.

Both the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture are also actively participating; the former with the various Farmers Service Centres and the members of the latter, the large-scale sugar cane growers are affixing the Triple-Rinse posters at strategic locations all over their estates.

It is expected that this new version of the Triple-Rinse poster will be seen at all locations visited by the farmers and other users regularly involved with used pesticide containers

Mukesh Rughoo



Discussions with Myplas, Johannesburg - 3 December

As background, Myplas is the leading recycler of empty pesticide containers in South Africa. The company has worked closely with the crop protection industry, primarily in the Western Cape but also has partnerships in collection points as far afield as Upington and Tzaneen. Their operation was the focal point of the field visit made by the CropLife International Container Management group at their 3-day conference in November, close to Cape Town.

The purpose of the meeting was 3-fold:

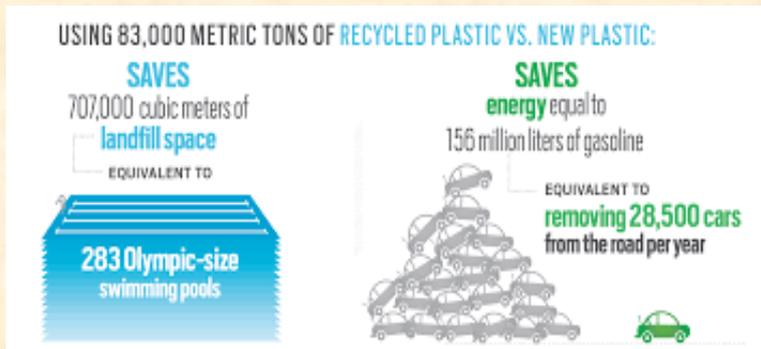
- To obtain feedback on the visit by the numerous international visitors. The issue on how to address the possible environmental contamination on collection sites was discussed
- To find ways to increase the level of collections with the possibility of assisting in bordering countries, such as southern Namibia.
- To explore end products which produce higher values

Addressing the 2nd point, follow-up with CropLife Namibia and GlobalGAP will take place.

On the 3rd point, two interesting end products were identified. These will be explored further and may need inputs from one or more of the international "mature program" partners.

Les Hillowitz

L-R, Nic Greyling, CropLife SA, Walter Jordaan and Johann Conradie, Myplas



Regulatory



The conference was organized collaboratively between the Environmental Chemical Pollution and Health (ECPH) Research Unit in the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University of Pretoria Centre for Sustainable Malaria Control (UP CSMC) and the Mammal Research Institute and the Faculty of Veterinary Science. Other South African universities involved included Stellenbosch, Northwest, Cape Town, Johannesburg and the University of Venda. The aim of this conference is to address existing gaps in our knowledge and to create a forum for networking among academics, scientists, industry and policy makers. The conference featured a range of topics including human, animal and environmental exposures, related health effects and biological screening for endocrine disruption.

It provided an excellent setting for intellectual development and discussions on the challenges being faced not only on a global level but to also focus on challenges facing developing nations in Africa. On the first day, a Mini-Symposium was held for junior scientists and postgraduate students. It included a student mentor session, which allowed opportunity for more to discussions and sharing of ideas with senior scientists present at the conference. The presentations were given under seven sessions including an overview of the current status of EDCs, human health effects, wildlife effects and animal studies; methods and emerging end points; unique challenges in Africa; translation and communication of EDCs and finally a discussion on opportunities for collaboration and capacity building in Africa.

Key highlights from presentations and discussions

- Health effects: Major focus was on exposures at different stages of development including sensitive windows, linkages of exposures to disease and dysfunction.
- Environmental effects: case studies of wildlife and effects on water
- Development of EDC detection tools (for water etc.) with indications that traditional methods of detection are not sufficient.
- Policy processes including resolutions at ICCM4 on EDCs and the need to provide an interface between the work of scientists and policy.
- A key recommendation at the end of the conference was the need to increase collaboration and more research on the priority areas including environment; animals, humans, cellular, molecular and the mechanisms of disruption.

The next conference will be held in 2018.

Stella Simiyu Wafukho

Pollinator Health: African Apicultural Platform (AAP) – General Assembly

AAP general Assembly was held from November 12 – 15 in Crowne Plaza Hotel, Harare Zimbabwe with the objective of taking stock of the activities that have taken place since its establishment a year ago, discussion ongoing activities, 2016 plans and a field visit to a fruit producing farm to see live pollination of strawberries, blueberries and peaches by bees. The meeting was opened by the Zimbabwe's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, Mr. Ringson Chitsiko.

Discussions were based on data collected from member states and presentations prior to and during the meeting respectively. Presentations were as follows;

- Regional policy and institutional frameworks for apiculture, bee health and pollination services in Africa with focus on identifying existing coherence and gaps, and options for harmonization of the diverse frameworks.
- Impact of environmental threats and stress factors on bees, bee products and pollination services in Africa.
- Common regulation and legislation for pesticides management in Africa
- Knowledge management portal for honey production, bee health and pollination

Stella Simiyu Wafukho



Participants at the AAP General Assembly- Harare Zimbabwe

Association Management

CropLife Asia: Stewardship Training of Trainers – Training & Facilitation Skills

Bangkok, 30 Nov – 4 Dec 2015

With the objective of improving the regional training capacity of its national association network, CropLife Asia organized the training program as the first step towards this goal. **The Training coordinator of CropLife Africa Middle East, Manon Dohmen**, led the training and facilitated the sessions. The program consisted of two parts: 3 days allocated to theoretical sessions on training and facilitation skills and 2 days of individual sessions conducted by the trainees.

A total of 18 participants (13 male, 5 female) attended the program. The group consisted of staff of national CropLife associations, member companies, and from partner organizations such as AVRDC (Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre and SOCODEV, an NGO working with farmers in Vietnam.

The focus of the training program was on how to effectively transfer technical knowledge to adult audiences – farmers, agro dealers etc. Also discussed during the first three days were: training principles, qualities of a professional trainer, preparation of a training program, the SDF (Set-up, Delivery, Finish) model, adult learning, training approaches and methods, questioning, evaluation and follow up, and developing a training program. All sessions were facilitated in an interactive manner with lots of exercises and sharing of experience of participants. All sessions took place in English.

At the start of the program, each participant had to select a technical topic on pesticides. On the Thursday and Friday, each participant had to facilitate a training session of 20 minutes covering the selected technical information. During the session, participants had to apply what they had learned in theory the day's prior. After the session, feedback was provided by the other participants and the facilitator on the performance of the participants using an evaluation sheet in which marks were given for several aspects of the session.

Key processing styles



Exercise on the SDF model



Brainstorming on preparing a program



Representing the Plant Science Industry

As the ambience within the group was extremely good, particularly during the individual sessions, it was clear that everyone was very much at ease within the group with lots of laughter during the sessions and which contributed to the feedback.

During exercises for the first three days, participants were constantly mixed and were thereby forced to work with each other, despite the language challenges. Discussions continued during coffee breaks and lunches with everyone mingling freely.

The knowledge of each participant was evaluated with a written pre- and post-test, and practical session. When presenting, they had to use the SDF model to structure their session to explain the topic, visualize this, and let participants practice this. Important for the exercise was to think about the behavioral change we want to achieve and let people practice this.

All participants were well prepared and some had continued working well into the night before.

While some displayed a natural talent for training, others showed an aptitude and enthusiasm that with some additional structured training and coaching, they could become really good trainers. Overall, it was a much-needed move in the right direction to have effective trainers on the ground in Asia.

The exercise also demonstrated how CropLife International networks cross fertilize and support one another in terms of sharing expertise and learning's.

Raghavan Sampathkumar



Musical chairs as recap



Training approaches



Margolis wheel

Plant Biotechnology

Change in the leadership at AfricaBio

Owing to personal reasons Dr. Nompumelelo Obokoh (Mpumi) decided not to renew her contract as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AfricaBio at the end of January 2016. Mpumi informed the Board that it's for family reasons that she will disengage from AfricaBio's executive position. The Board accepted her decision and will soon start on the recruitment process for her successor.

Mpumi served as the CEO of AfricaBio for a period of four years with diligence and professionalism. She renewed and built AfricaBio into a dynamic organization, well respected internationally. Her key achievements include:

developing and implementing excellent management systems at the Secretariat, building a good financial base and programs, positioning AfricaBio as Africa's eminent biotechnology policy advocacy agency, and enlarging the organization's remit and membership. On the whole, Mpumi made monumental contributions to the revitalization and development of AfricaBio. Her dynamic leadership will be greatly missed.

The Board appointed Dr. Bongani Maseko as Acting CEO of organization from 19 December 2015.

On Friday 11 December a farewell function was arranged for Mpumi



Dr. Nompumelelo Obokoh (Mpumi)

Les Hillowitz

Meeting with USDA

USDA, Embassy of the United States of America, Pretoria, requested a meeting to discuss the opportunities that might present themselves in Southern Africa in which the private sector could become engaged.

Representing USDA were Abigail Nguema, Agricultural Attaché and Dirk Esterhuizen, Senior Agricultural Specialist.

USDA focuses on trade between the US and the receptive country. The support of plant biotechnology falls under their "trade pillar" and they have always been supportive of AfricaBio in this regard. The Pretoria office of USDA is now responsible for 9 Southern African countries including both Mozambique and Zambia. With regard to Zambia, they have had requests from the Cotton Growers Association in the country to "push" the biotech agenda and earlier this year made a visit facilitated through their Lusaka Embassy.

Under their "Trade" umbrella they have 3 pillars namely: "policy" "market information" and "training". All possible ways were explored seeking their support for our SSP concept programs but the tight specifications surrounding their initiative prevents this.

They are keen to link up with CropLife as a "training partner" as part of their "Cochran Fellowship Program" whereby candidates undergo a 2-week training in the US. This will focus primarily on plant biotechnology. Details will be relayed to the CLI Washington office.

Les Hillowitz



Abigail Nguema, Agricultural Attaché and Dirk Esterhuizen, Senior Agricultural Specialist.

Plant Biotechnology

Zambia National Biosafety Authority Launched

The Zambian government has launched the National Biosafety Authority (NBA), whose core business is to regulate genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or products of GMOs in the country. The launch that took place on November 26, 2015 at Radisson Blu Hotel, in Lusaka was officiated by the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Michael Kaingu who said that the National Biosafety Authority is now fully functional in order to ensure that Zambia benefits from the safe application and use of modern biotechnology.

"Safety will now be ensured in the development, use and handling of all gene modification technologies and products thereof because the NBA has put in place a system for notification and handling applications for permits and other key matters of biosafety," Dr. Kaingu said. During a parliamentary meeting held on December 2, 2015, members of parliament were informed by Hon. Dr. Michael Kaingu, that the Authority would oversee GM crop research. "We are now on a clear path for the development of biotechnology. Our scientists are hard working to regulate and develop genetically modified crops, and we now have the capacity to regulate them," said Dr. Kaingu.

He informed parliament that his ministry in collaboration with the ministry of agriculture, livestock and fisheries has been working hand in hand to put in place a biosafety framework and policy. The minister indicated that other ministries involved in biotechnology and biosafety policy formulation included the ministries of health, lands, natural resources and environmental protection as well as the ministry of local government and housing.

For more information on the Zambian National Biosafety Authority, contact Doris Musondaat: dorismusonda@gmail.com

ISAAA



Kenya National Biosafety Authority Receives Public Comments on Bt Cotton Environmental

The Kenya National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has formally received comments from the public as it embarks on analysing feedback for consideration of the application for environmental release (open cultivation) of Bt cotton in Kenya. The public forum that took place on December 11, 2015, comes four months after Kenya Agricultural Research Organization (KALRO) filed a similar application for insect protected maize under the WEMA – Water Efficient Maize for Africa project.

More than 100 stakeholders, mainly farmers, consumers, academia, media, and students attended, where further clarifications on the application were presented.

NBA regulators outlined key components of the application and the rationale for soliciting public comments as stipulated in the Biosafety Act 2009. Speaking at the event, Dr. Charles Waturu of KALRO, who has been working as the Principal Investigator on Bt cotton research for the last 10 years, explained that research done at the national agricultural research centre has confirmed the efficacy of Bt technology in controlling the African bollworm. He added that Bt cotton would only require 2 sprays instead of the average 10 sprays necessary for conventional cotton. Thus Kenyan small-scale farmers will realize considerable savings on production costs from Bt cotton. "Bt cotton could revive Kenyan textile industry from a meagre 20,000 ha of cotton currently to more than 350,000 ha" said Dr. Waturu.

Echoing sentiments of many who attended the meeting, farmers were eager to know when Kenya would embrace Bt cotton. "We should stop having baseless arguments and start talking about when we will get the Bt cotton seeds," said Mr. Muriuki, a farmer. "This public meeting is an eye opener for us. We now have adequate knowledge and will support Bt cotton if it is going to assure jobs for the youth" said a member of Bunge La Wanainchi, a Caucus that gathers opinions at grassroots on national matters.

NBA's approval process for environmental release takes 90-150 days from the date of acknowledgement of the application. A decision is thus expected in February 2015, followed by national performance trials by the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS).

For more on the application, contact Dr. Will Tonui, CEO of the National Biosafety Authority, Kenya at ceo@biosafetykenya.go.ke

ISAAA



UPCOMING EVENTS

ToT workshop, CropLife Cameroon	Nov 30-Dec 04
Meeting with recycler (South Africa)	Dec 3
Pollinator Issue Team meeting, Brussels	Dec 14
Regulatory Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	Dec 15 -16
ToT workshop, CropLife Cote d'Ivoire	Dec 14-18
Steering Committee meeting of the regional project for the Integrated Protection of Cotton in Africa (PR-PICA), Abidjan, CI	Dec 17-18
CP Communications Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	Feb 9
Joint Communications Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	Feb 10
Anti-Counterfeiting Steering Committee Meeting, Brussels	Feb 10
Crop Protection Strategy Council Meeting, Brussels	Feb 11
GlobalGAP NTWG, Stellenbosch, South Africa	Feb 6
RRC Meeting, Limburgerhof	Mar 1
Risk assessment training by IUPAC, Nairobi, Kenya	Feb 23–25
Maghreb Regulatory Meeting, Lyon	Mar 8-9 /Apr 12-13
Association of National Biosafety Agencies in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya	March 7-8
CLAME Board Meeting & AGM, Brussels	April 4 –5
IPM/RU Project Team meeting, Brussels	April 6
Stewardship Steering Committee meeting, Brussels	April 7
Container Management Project Team meeting	April 8
Hub and Regulatory Meeting WCA (Lagos or Accra)	May 10-11
Hub and Regulatory Meeting ESA (Nairobi or Dar es Salam)	Aug 30-31





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GROWING FOOD – CREATING RENEWABLES – SUPPLYING SUSTAINABLY

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