



Stewardship

Container Management - South Africa

Within the CropLife International Container Management Project Team (CMPT), South Africa is rated as having a “mature” container management scheme, this being on a national basis and operating for more than 3 years. The scheme however emerged, as a spin-off from the Africa Stockpiles Program and at the time was not formalized under the umbrella of CropLife SA.

The scheme was basically driven by the agro dealerships. Since those humble beginnings, CropLife South Africa identified and supports 15 recyclers countrywide. CropLife AME are now working to: (1) better understand the scheme at grass roots level, (2) to obtain accurate figures on the number of containers placed in the market and the number recovered for recycling.

Plans are also being developed to hold a “container management workshop” during the 2nd quarter of 2015 to establish what needs to be done to improve on the level of collections and recycling. Arrangements are also underway for the CropLife International Container Management Project Team to hold their annual meeting in November in Cape Town.

This meeting will provide an ideal opportunity for “African Stakeholders” to partake and will include those national associations who have active pilot programs running.



Plastic waste prior to processing



GLOBALG.A.P.



Above: Processed Material

Below: Refuse bags made with 20% HDPE



During the month of February a visit was made to the Western Cape with a two-fold purpose:

- * To get a feel of the container management scheme in the Western Cape where the influence of GlobalGAP is fundamental, owing to the level of exports of fresh fruits.
- * To start preparations for the CropLife International CMPT Meeting in the Cape, week commencing 16 November.

Visits were made to a prominent recycler, two pesticide distributors and to a "collection point" in Ceres. The opportunity was also taken to meet with the CropLife Cape Working Group (CropLife SA) in Paarl on Friday 27th.

Key findings that emerged from the visit are:

- * We are a lot more comfortable that the figures of 6000 tons plastics per year for South Africa looks realistic and that the percentage retrieved for recycling is around 50%.
- * The key issue for any improvement lies in the push on "Triple Rinsing" and puncturing and this must be pursued. Several ideas on how this could be achieved based on inputs from the recycler, the distributors, the "collection point" in Ceres and brief discussions at the CropLife Cape Working Group, came forward.
- * With regard to the workshop planned for May, the venue for this should be the Western Cape.
- * One cannot overstate the support the management of empty containers receives from the

Les Hillowitz

Container "collection point" in Ceres

CropLife Malawi: Spray Service Provider (SSP) Pilot Initiative

CropLife Malawi, in partnership with the Malawi Oilseeds Sector Transformation (MOST) is to launch the first ever Spray Service Provider (SSP) pilot initiative in the country. MOST is a DfID (Department for International Development) funded market systems program, which will run until October 2017. Its focus is on sector coordination in cotton, groundnuts, soybean and sunflower value chains in alignment with the National Export Strategy.

The government of Malawi has designated cotton as one of the strategic crops that can help grow the economy. However, there are several challenges impacting on cotton productivity including pest attacks with national average yield at only 600kg/ha. It is against this background that MOST has supported the spray service provider concept as a pilot in the Chikhwawa district, one of the key cotton



Participants assembling a Jacto knapsack sprayer

The main goal is to make available improved pest management programme which is fundamental in increasing productivity of cotton per unit area and raising incomes for farmers. This includes, increasing overall volumes of cotton production and stimulating industries based around cotton through the increased volumes, and enhancing the export base for the country.

In early February 32 spray service providers were trained by CropLife Malawi to provide services to farmers within the district at a fee to be paid after sales to the cotton ginners through deductions. The training covered several topics of IPM which included scouting of cotton pests and determination of threshold levels, (IPM), safe and effective application of pesticides, effective use and maintenance of sprayers, safety in the handling of pesticides and record keeping. The trained SPPs have been equipped with the appropriate Personnel Protection Equipment (PPE), a suitable sprayer and a pushbike to facilitate mobility to the designated farmers.

MOST and CropLife Malawi are geared to upscale the initiative to other cotton growing areas as well as to additional crops of interest to MOST. The partners are also exploring strategies for ensuring that the initiative is sustainable in the long term.

Ronald Chilumpha



Group photo: team of Spray Service Providers and facilitators

Regulatory

Stakeholders in Kenya meet to discuss the aftermath of the EU public consultation on Endocrine Disruptors (ED's)

On February 10, the Ministry of Environment called for an information-sharing meeting on the European Union's Public Consultation on Endocrine Disruptors that ran from September 2014 to January 2015. The meeting brought together over 40 participants representing academia, grower groups; government departments and agencies among others. Although most of the agencies were not able to participate in the consultation, the meeting provided a platform to discuss the implications of the ongoing global processes on ED's on a country like Kenya among other emerging policy issues.

Discussions were guided by four important questions; *what was the public consultation all about? What else is happening on the global platform? What implications do these processes have on Kenya? And what can the authorities and stakeholders do?*

What was the public consultation all about?

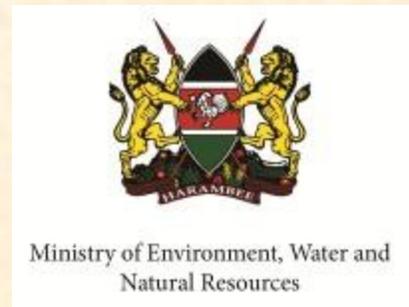
The public consultation on endocrine disruptors was launched by the European Union to seek comments from academic experts, stakeholder organisations and public authorities around the world on experiences in assessment of EDs, the methodologies used and the outcomes respectively. The web consultation was specifically limited to among other things comments on defining and regulatory decision making options for EDs. The impact assessment was necessitated by the fact that during the adoption of EU's regulations on Plant Protection Products 1107/2009 (Pesticides) and the Biocidal Products 528/2012 (Biocides), there was neither definition nor scientific criteria to define what EDs are. Thus there was a requirement on the part of the European Commission to develop the criteria. Notably, until the final criteria are adopted, at the end of the assessment of the submissions on the public consultation, a set of interim criteria applies. This is the use of a hazard based 'cut-off' criteria for regulatory decision-making. Nevertheless even when the assessment process is finalized there is no guarantee that there will be a return to risk assessment in regulation of these products.

What else is happening on the global platform?

In a statement read on behalf of the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, the government reiterated its commitment to the attainment of sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and underscored the need for stakeholders to deliberate on the best management practices for EDs. This was cited as becoming an increasingly important topic on international fora alongside that of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) as an environmental, developmental and health issue. It was noted that Kenya's presidency on the Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (SAICM), a policy framework to promote chemical safety around the world is encouraging regional responsibility to sound management of chemicals. Several consultations have been taking place on this platform since its establishment and more recently the African group meeting held in December 2014 at the Open Ended Working Group 2 where respective governments were encouraged to increase awareness, engage in scientific research and promote integrated planning around EDs.



Principal Secretary: Mr. Richard Lesiyampe Ministry of Environment



Stakeholders at the meeting were invited to participate in regional and national consultations in preparation for International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4); an international meeting under the SAICM platform; at the end of 2015 where more deliberations will be made on EDs and HHPs among other topics.

What implications do these processes have on Kenya?

As the world deliberates at various platforms, the real quest for countries and regions will be about endorsing either hazard based or risk based approaches in assessment and eventual regulation of ED's and HHPs. In the case of the EU implementation of hazard criteria the potential implications on agriculture in Kenya and countries that similarly depend a great deal on agriculture is immense.

In the first instance hazard based assessment approaches to regulatory decision making will impact negatively on agricultural production of key commodities such as coffee, tea, vegetables; fruits and cereals as important inputs may be withdrawn. Secondly in relation to trade; EU may potentially revise import tolerance to default level of 0.001mg/kg, which is practically zero as substances that trigger any cut-off value will not normally proceed to risk assessment, but be denied registration or have registration withdrawn. In trade terms this will result in an estimated loss in cash terms of Euro 65 bn globally; Euro 7.9bn for Sub Saharan Africa and Euro 521m for Kenya respectively. Kenya's fresh produce and cash crop sectors will therefore be worst hit.

What can the authorities and stakeholders do?

Participants who represented key stakeholder groups in agriculture observed that the meeting was an eye opener and regretted to have missed an important opportunity to participate in the EU public consultation process. The continued partnership between Agrochemicals Association of Kenya and the Ministry of Environment was lauded and encouraged to facilitate stakeholder engagements on current challenges facing sound management of chemicals such as waste management; legislation on agrochemicals and chemical management processes among others. Key recommendations reached by the participants were as follows:

- * The problem of EDs and HHPs should be seen in the complete context, with the need to balance health, environment, agricultural productivity, the economy and livelihoods.
- * Research institutions should participate in generating scientific data to be used for decision-making. In addition that the Ministry and other partners should explore possibilities for funding research and establish advisory teams at national and regional levels on these matters.
- * Stakeholders to support efforts to strengthen capacity for safe use of products to avoid rampant abuse and misuse as well as revitalization of the agricultural extension services which played a key role in education of farmers.
- * Effective information sharing among agencies.

Stella Simiyu Wafukho



Anti Counterfeiting

Workshop: Risk reduction through the prevention, detection and management of the illegal trade in pesticides in Egypt

The CropLife Egypt "Anti-Counterfeiting Flagship Project" in participation with the Agricultural Pesticide Committee (APC) organized a 2-day workshop on 11 & 12 January 2015, in Cairo under the MOU between CropLife Egypt and the APC. Participants numbering around 60, included:

- * The Ministry of Agriculture
- * Agricultural Pesticide Committee
- * Pesticides Surveillance Dept.
- * The Ministry of Interior
- * Police linked to Environment and Water Surfaces
- * Police linked to Supply and Internal Trade
- * CropLife Egypt
- * The media

The key objective of the workshop was to strengthen the fight against the illegal trade of agricultural pesticides in Egypt. To focus on the issues and activities related to the illegal trade of agricultural pesticides. To discuss relevant issues such as traceability, suspicious international shipments, integrated inspection, risk analysis, risk communication including multilateral cooperation. This with a view to exchanging experiences, learning from one another and developing solutions for common problems. This to be achieved through:

- * Increasing the level of cooperation between the police and the pesticide regulatory authorities
- * Introducing a more effective anti-counterfeiting protection program.
- * Ensuring traceability along the pesticide supply-chain
- * The workshop took the format of roundtable discussions and kicked-off with the distribution of a questionnaire setting out the problem, for which participants were divided into workgroups for brainstorming the issues.

The 2nd day was dedicated to solutions to the problem facilitated by the distribution of a second questionnaire followed by roundtable discussions and a presentation by the Police unit linked to Supply and Internal Trade in which they demonstrated their role in raids and seizures.

The groups' findings showed the importance of the following:

- * The need for more transparency and traceability in shipping documents
- * The need for more compliance and enforcement tools and better risk analysis
- * The importance of training and communication

The workshop was widely covered by the media through both local and online newspapers; the Ministry of Agriculture TV Channel covered the opening

Said Abdella



Representing the Plant Science Industry

Cote d'Ivoire: Anti-counterfeiting Training

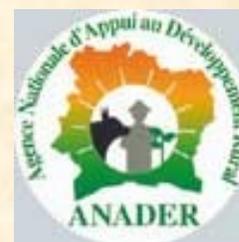
The training took place on 27 February in the Agnibilekro region of Cote d'Ivoire. This was directed at farmers and farmers' organizations of the village of Yobouakro, Agnibilekro, officers and agents of ANADER, the extension service of Cote d'Ivoire, agri input dealers operating in the Sub-Prefecture of Agnibilekro and the Administration Officer and Sub-Prefet of Agnibilekro, Mrs. Jeanne Okani

The workshop was organized by the Sub-Prefet of Agnibilekro following the anti-counterfeiting training in 2013 for the agents and officers of the customs services and Ministry of Agriculture, followed by refresher meetings in Abengourou, Agnibilekro and Koun-Fao. The objective of the meeting was to:

- * Highlight the issues of fake pesticides and the associated risks for farmers and consumers.
- * Provide guidance to farmers on the purchasing of pesticides by stressing the need to seek advice from the agents of the Ministry of Agriculture and ANADER, buying only registered products from certified agri input dealers
- * Provide guidance on the safe transport and storage of pesticides.
- * Provide advice for the responsible use of pesticides.
- * Stress on the risks related to the misuse of pesticides and the need to engage trained applicators (SSP's).
- * In the overall, participants found the exercise extremely valuable, requesting regular follow-ups.

Mrs NGuessan Seraphne, Manager of the ANADER area office in Agnibilekro was the guest and facilitator of the workshop.

Bama Yao



Mrs. J. Okani, Sub-Prefet of Agnibilekro, and Mrs. S. NGuessan, guest speaker and facilitator (Top L-R) addressed participants, traditional authorities and farmers: Photo Courtesy ANADER Agnibilekro

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Seminar: Egypt "Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy"

The World Customs Organization (WCO) and Japan Customs in cooperation with Egyptian Customs organized a seminar on IPR and "Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy" at the National Customs Training Institute in Alexandria, Egypt, 9 - 12 February.

The CropLife Egypt "Flagship" project was represented by Said Abdella, Abdallah Agour, accompanied by members of the Agricultural Pesticide Committee, Dr. Mostafa Abdelasattar and Dr. Nagy Abouzeid. Also included were Ms. Sandra Wens of the WCO and Japanese Customs expert Mr. Imaizumi. Several representatives covering some well-known brands also participated.

Said Abdella delivered a presentation on the dangers of counterfeit pesticides to public health, the environment and the impact on export crops. Aside from this, the violation of IPR impacts negatively on investment in the country. He stressed on the concerted effort needed by all stakeholders to fight this scourge.

The critical role of customs as the front-line in the fight against the illegal trade of pesticides was highlighted and the importance of specialized training for customs officers to enhance their abilities and open communication channels for information exchange, was endorsed.

Said Abdella



Anti-Counterfeiting Steering Committee Meeting: Washington DC - 12 February

As part of the overall meeting, the CLAME regional update covered the "flagship projects" presently in operation.

Egypt is an excellent example of a well-planned and concerted effort. We are optimistic that these efforts are going to make a real change to the existing situation, in spite of the fact that in most cases affected member companies normally do not pursue formal legal action when seizures of fake and illegal products are conducted by the authorities.

The Kenyan project is clearly behind in its implementation timetable and efforts are being made for a catch-up.

The details of the Cameroon "flagship project" and the "embossment case" was also shared with the committee.

Les Hillowitz



Participants at the Anti-Counterfeiting Steering Committee meeting

Association Management

CLAME Meets with IFPRI and USAID: Washington DC



L-R Rudolf Guyer, Daniel Gilligan, Naureen Karachiwalla, and Meghan Olivier

During the week of 9 February, Rudolf Guyer and Les Hillowitz held discussions with IFPRI and USAID in Washington DC.

The discussions with IFPRI centred on e-verification products in Uganda and the role of this technology in anti-counterfeiting campaigns. From their side, IFPRI provided a summary presentation on the results of their baseline survey for the impact evaluation study.

Representatives from IFPRI were:

- Daniel Gilligan, Deputy Director
- Naureen Karachiwalla, Postdoctoral Fellow
- Meghan Olivier, Project Manager

Daniel and Naureen will be in Uganda the last week of March and it was suggested that either Rudolf or Les should try to link up with this visit.

Les Hillowitz

The discussions with USAID focused on the success of the SSP cocoa project under the sub-award agreement with the WCF / ACI and to provide final feedback on the project. The opportunity was taken to present the “award winning videos” taken during the project.

Both Daniel Gilligan and Naureen Karachiwalla from IFPRI were able to join this meeting as USAID are moving strongly into the area of e-verification and it was extremely worthwhile to have both parties around the table.

It would seem that USAID is firmly focused on the issue of fighting counterfeit crop protection products whilst the Gates Foundation are more focused on using e-verification in the protection of high quality seed inputs in their priority countries.



L-R (sitting) Rudolf Guyer, Mark Doyle, Faith Bartz, Mark Husenga, and Suzanne Poland
(Standing) Daniel Gilligan, Naureen Karachiwalla

With regard to the SSP cocoa project, reference was made to the “Tulane Report” which covers cocoa in West Africa and is specific on “human trafficking”, “farm labour” and “tasks that children should not perform”. The benefits of the SSP concept in these areas were emphasized.

Representatives from USAID were:

- Mark Huisenga, Senior Program Manager
- Mark Doyle, Agricultural Development Officer
- Suzanne Poland, Agriculture / Crop Advisor, Bureau of Food Security
- Faith Bartz, Fellow in the American Academy of Science, USAID Fellowship Program, Office of the Bureau of Food Security

Les Hillowitz

Participation of CropLife Cote d'Ivoire at the Agricultural Fair, SARA 2015: April 03-12

CropLife Cote d'Ivoire and other stakeholders in the private sector involved in agricultural production and policy programs, attended the meeting organized by the Ministry of Agriculture covering the organization of the upcoming agricultural fair known as SARA 2015. This will be the third such fair following those of 1997 and 1999. The meeting, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture provided useful information on the various opportunities offered under the national program for investment in agriculture known as PNIA, which was launched by the G8 and supported by the World Bank. PNIA aims to boost agricultural development by raising growth to 9% by 2015.

The Ministry of Agriculture would like the support of the private sector and hopes to attract investment in agriculture through SARA 2015. The Ministry sees the participation of the private sector contributing to a successful fair. CropLife Cote d'Ivoire has already confirmed its participation and will have a stand. Member companies will have their own stands and will participate at the various conferences and roundtable discussions during the fair.

The CropLife delegation to the meeting comprised; Bruno Bernos, President of the Board, Guy Liabra and Mamadou Diallo, President and Vice President of the Executive Committee, Roger Yeboue, Executive Secretary, Adama Coulibaly, President Ex-officio, and Bama Yao, Regional Director for CropLife AME.

Bama Yao

CropLife Cote d'Ivoire delegation (L-R, President of the Board, President of the ExCo, the President Ex Officio and the Executive Secretary (wearing red shirt—second row).



CropLife Cameroon Attends Launch of the 2015 Crop Year

The traditional launch of the “crop year” for 2015 took place in Buea in southern Cameroon. The ceremony attracted several hundred participants, mostly farmers and stakeholders representing numerous organizations and projects in the agricultural sector as well as the administrative authorities. The CropLife Cameroon delegation comprised of 3 representatives namely; Arnaud Kingue, Seraphin Njomgue and Christian Fosso.

The address given by CropLife Cameroon highlighted on the following:

The excellent cooperation between MINADER and CropLife Cameroon, particularly in the training of stakeholders. The Minister and his collaborators were congratulated for their valued efforts, which contributed to the successful outcome of the WCF-ACI SSP project in Cameroon. The success of this project will without doubt lead to the improvement of cocoa production and serves as a platform to extend the concept to other crops.

The impact of fake agri-inputs on the markets and the need to engage in strong policies and actions to combat this scourge - the risks associated with fake inputs resulting in crop losses, health issues, government revenue, necessitate in joint punitive measures

Bama Yao

Communications

Crop Protection Communications Committee Meeting, Washington DC– 12 February

The meeting kicked off with a representative from the U.S. Biotechnology Industry Association (BIO) giving an overview of the GMO Answers platform – gmoanswers.com - that was created to facilitate an open and transparent conversation with the public by answering their questions about GMOs. The site is part of the biotech industry's efforts to build trust in the technology, educate a wider audience about its benefits and to dispel some common myths. She said the platform had also produced a selection of resources on GMOs, had influenced a number of key journalists and was setting up exhibits at events in the U.S. to take the message to the public. While the predominant audience is the U.S., she added that resources were also being translated into other key languages. On "Pollinator Health", the 2014 achievements were outlined which include regular issue sensing and research reviews, and dedicated resources that have been put in place in CropLife Africa and Middle East, Latin America and Asia.

In the regional updates that followed, Les Hillowitz updated the committee on the work of CropLife Africa Middle East. He said the issue had been discussed at all three Hub Meetings, including a workshop for regulators and CropLife member companies in Zambia. Further activities included participation at the inauguration of the African Reference Lab for Bee Health in Nairobi, the launch of the Africa Apicultural Platform and the development of a Pollinator Forum in South Africa. He made mention of the advocacy efforts that had been enhanced by CropLife International's stewardship newsletter, which focused on pollinators.

It was noted that the topics of endocrine disruptors (EDs) and highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) would feature on the agenda of ICCM4 in September 2015. CropLife International attended the OEWG ICCM4 'agenda setting' meeting in December 2014 where it organized a side event on EDs with ICCA. There is a history of NGO activity around SAICM meetings and further activity at ICCM4 is expected.

The committee was updated on ECPA's activity including ongoing advocacy surrounding the EU consultation on EDs ahead of proposals for new criteria, which are expected in 2016. It was mentioned that ECPA had created a website – www.reasonabledebate.eu – to communicate publicly on ED and that ECPA continues to coordinate with other chemical organisations. On the issue of HHPs, the 2014 achievements were highlighted, including the commitment by CropLife International to build capacity on risk assessment in the developing regions and promote a risk-based approach to FAO and other stakeholders. On "Stewardship Update" the committee was updated on the West Africa cocoa project. The public website, which hosts a series of high quality videos about the project, was made live in November and media outreach has resulted in a number of articles online and in print. Social media messages have also been published through the CropLife International twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn Accounts. The videos have had over 1,500 views and won an award for Best Strategic Communications at the Clarion Awards in London.

It was noted that two "Leading the Vision" newsletters had been published in 2014, the latest newsletter focused on pollinators and the next edition would be published in April. The committee was reminded that the IPM Brochure had been updated in 2014 and 3,000 copies had been circulated to the global network. Several associations have also translated the document into their native language.

On the work undertaken by the Sustainability Committee, Mike Michener mentioned the many successes of this group during 2014. He added priorities for 2015 would include advocating for Sustainable Development Goals that enhance the industry's license to operate, creating a science-based approach among international policy makers, ensuring CFS does not restrict the enabling environment for plant science and promoting the work of Farming First.

Will Surman / Les Hillowitz



Participants at the Combined Communications meeting

Plant Biotechnology

BIOTECH (Genetically Modified) Crops can Make a Major Contribution to Feeding a Global Population of 9 Billion People by 2050

Presented by The Right Honourable Owen Paterson MP (UK), former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the UK (2012-2014), at the annual South African agricultural biotechnology industry / ISAAA (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications) media conference in Pretoria on Tuesday 24 February 2015. – (Shortened)

Feeding a population of over nine billion people in 2050 is one of the most daunting challenges facing mankind during the remaining years of this century. From the phenomenal global results achieved during the past 19 years, 16 in South Africa, it is evident that biotech (GM) crops can make a major contribution to meet this challenge, said Mr. Owen Paterson MP.

Speaking at the annual South African Agricultural Biotechnology Industry / ISAAA media conference in Pretoria, he said currently there are globally 870 million chronically hungry people, the majority in sub-Saharan Africa. Two billion are malnourished. Biotech crops can make a difference to alleviate hunger and poverty.

In the past 18 years (1996-2013), biotech crops produced an additional 441.4 million tons of food, fibre and feed on existing cropland. If it were not for biotech crops, an additional 132 million ha of conventional crops would have been required to produce the same tonnage.

Significant multiple benefits offered by biotech crops are not punted by the industry, Paterson continued, but are confirmed by the latest independent global meta analysis of 147 studies in the last 20 years by German economists, Klumper and Qaim 2014.

They concluded that on average GM technology adoption has reduced chemical pesticide use by 37%, increased crop yields by 22% and boosted farmer profits by 68%.

The latest provisional data for 1996 to 2013 showed that crop production value increased by US\$133 billion and from 1996-2012 saved 500 million kg active ingredient of pesticide. In 2013 alone, CO₂ emissions were reduced by 28 billion kg, equivalent to taking 12 million cars off the road for one year.

During 1996-2013 the cumulative economic benefits for industrial countries amounted to gains of US\$65.2 billion and for developing countries US\$10.1 billion. In 2014 the global value of biotech crops estimated by Croprosis was US\$ 15.7 billion. The estimated global farm gate revenues of the harvested commercial biotech crop "end product" are more than US\$157 billion.

Biotech crops continue to grow at a phenomenal rate. In 2014, according to the ISAAA report, for the 19th consecutive year (16 in South Africa) a record 181.5 million hectares of biotech crops were grown globally by 18 million farmers in 28 countries (27 in 2013) where more than half the world's population (4 billion) live. This was an increase of more than six million ha from 2013. One new country, Bangladesh, came on board with the first Bt brinjal.

Of the 28 countries, 20 were developing and eight developed countries. For the third consecutive year developing countries with 16.5 million smallholder farmers, out of the total of 18 million farmers, planted more biotech crops than industrial countries (1.5 million farmers).

Status in Africa

South Africa continues as the leading biotech country in Africa. Biotech crops – maize, soya and cotton – were grown on 2.7 million ha (2.9 million in 2013). The drop was primarily due to late onset of rain, lower commodity prices and adoption rate approaching saturation point. Nearly 86% of maize area is GM, soybeans 92% and cotton 100%. Maize is estimated at 2.5 million ha (2.73 million ha 2013). Biotech maize comprised 2.14 million ha (2.36 million 2013).

Soybean plantings in 2014 increased from 520 000 ha to 600 000 ha, with 92% biotech, with all 552 000 ha being herbicide-tolerant trait (92% and 478 000 ha in 2013). The total cotton area is estimated at 9 000 ha (8 000 ha in 2013).

It is estimated that the economic gain from biotech crops for South Africa for the period 1998 to 2012 was US\$1.15 billion. In 2012 alone, the gain was US\$218.5 million.

South Africa with its 2.7 million ha ranks eighth in the adoption of GMOs after the USA with 73.1 million ha, Brazil second with 42.2 million ha, Argentina third with 24.3 million ha and India and Canada fourth, both with 11.5 million ha.

According to the report steady and promising progress is being made in Africa. Sudan increased Bt cotton acreage by nearly 50%, to 90 000 ha. Burkina Faso is the third African country growing Bt cotton

It is encouraging to note that seven African countries in 2014 continued with field trials with a wide range of biotech crops, i.e. Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda. A major breakthrough in Africa was the launch of the first non-GMO drought-tolerant DroughtTEGO™ maize developed by WEMA (Water Efficient Maize for Africa) in conjunction with the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and Monsanto, who donated the technology royalty-free. Successful trials were conducted in South Africa by the Agricultural Research Council.

Trials done in Kenya showed increased yields from 1.8t/ha to 4.5t/ha. The Bt GM drought-tolerant maize is expected to be released in South Africa by 2017. Yields are expected to increase by 20-35% to produce an additional two million MT of maize in drought years to feed an additional 14-21 million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

EU Developments

Five EU countries continued to plant biotech crops on 143 016 ha (148 013 in 2013). Spain led with 131 538 ha of Bt maize, followed by Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Czechia. In addition, the EU imports 30 million tons of grain, more than 90% being biotech, mainly soybeans, soymeal and maize, from the USA and Latin America.

New Products

New GM products approved for planting in 2014 were Innate potato and alfalfa (lucerne) USA; brinjal, Bangladesh; HT plus IR soybean, Brazil; and drought-tolerant sugar cane, Indonesia. In the pipeline are some 71 new biotech crops listed for commercialisation during the next five years, subject to regulatory approval.

A proliferating network of anti-GMO activists is spending millions of dollars annually to convince the world to reject scientific fact in favour of activist myth. "This is eco-terrorism. It is witchcraft," emphasised Paterson.

This is often done with NGO and even EU support and in spite of overwhelming scientific evidence of GMO efficacy and safety.

Less than a year ago an organisation closely allied with Greenpeace, MASIPAG, violently attacked and destroyed a field trial of Golden Rice in the Philippines, while Greenpeace openly cheered them.

The UN Environment Programme has spent more than \$100 million to train developing countries in risk assessment of GMO crops. No UN money has been spent in assessing GMO benefits.

Last November incoming EU president Jean-Claude Juncker scrapped the important position of EU science adviser, not caring to renew the contract for Anne Glover, professor of cell biology, who had been doing excellent work. The vacancy was not filled.

These are all inhibiting factors that would condemn billions to poverty, hunger and underdevelopment, while the important role that biotech can play in alleviating human suffering and in spurring development are not recognised by individuals and even governments.

One of the ironic consequences is that the EU – at the spearhead of anti-GMO funding and with the well-meaning but misguided generosity of the privileged in Europe and elsewhere – cannot feed itself and has been relegated to a net food importer. The EU has therefore become a drag on the noble imperative of growing enough food to feed everyone and feed them well.

Nearly 805 million people – about one in every nine and the majority of them children – do not have enough to eat. Many of these poor people live in Africa – the continent with vast but underutilised resources of land, fertile soil and sun.

Fortunately the tentacles of the Green Blob – anti-GMO activists – can't reach every positive effort to break the shackles of poverty: in Burkina Faso farmers planting Bt cotton have increased their yields by an average 20% over non-GMO cotton. Pesticide applications were also reduced drastically. Profits increased by at least \$87 per hectare.

Africa is in fact showing Europe the way: in 2014 Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria recorded 13 field trials of GM crops, compared to a mere 12 field trials in the 28 member states of the EU.

Another positive development is the fact that influential people are beginning to realise that the anti-GMO Green Blob is the real danger to human health and prosperity.

- * Patrick Moore, one of the founders of Greenpeace in the 1970s – when it took account of science and respected human life – has broken ties with his old organisation and now works to expose Greenpeace's actions in especially the developing world.

- Kenyan-born Calestous Juma, who holds a chair in international development at Harvard in the US, has repeatedly slammed the EU for strong-arming African nations not to grow GM crops and threatening to cut off imports.
- The Keystone Alliance, a collaborative effort of industry and conservation groups in the US, has demonstrated that modern agriculture resulted in less water, fertiliser and energy used in major crops, while dramatically lowering the environmental impact. Yields have skyrocketed.
- Anti-GMO myths are slammed by a growing awareness of the health, sustainability and financial benefits of modern biotechnology. The facts are:
 - ◆ Every independent scientific institution in the world has found GMOs to be at least as safe as any other food. A simple example: naturally occurring toxins like aflatoxin are most effectively controlled by planting GMO crops engineered with Bt insect resistance. More than 4,5 billion people in the developing world are exposed to these toxins, which can suppress the immune system, retard growth and cause cancer and liver disease.
 - ◆ Farmers are not fooled by biotech companies into paying more for GMO seeds – nearly 100% of all farmers who plant biotech crops choose to continue planting biotech crops.
 - ◆ Going organic would be a disaster. Sustainable intensive agriculture produces more food on less land and therefore protects land for wildlife, recreation and urban development. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Norman Borlaug (father of the Green Revolution) summarised it as follows: “There are 6,6 billion people on the planet today. With organic farming we could only feed 4 billion of them. Which 2 billion would volunteer to die?”
 - ◆ Biotech has benefits for both farmers and consumers. Healthier soybeans, tomatoes that mimic good cholesterol, non-browning apples, healthier GMO potatoes and peanuts that lack two of the most intense allergens are some examples. Golden Rice, biofortified technology developed 15 years ago by German professors Ingo Potrykus and Pete Beyer, is a miracle grain enhanced with vitamin A producing beta-carotene.

Few people know that the first biotechnology product approved for food was rennet, a safer and more effective enzyme used to make cheese. All the insulin routinely used to keep diabetics alive comes from GMO bacteria. Previously one major industrial insulin processor had to process 11 tons of pig pancreases every day.

The challenge is to expose the anti-GMO activists' organised, fanatical antagonism to progress and science, Paterson said.



The Right Honourable Owen Paterson MP (UK), former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the UK (2012 – 2014) at the media conference in Pretoria

Modi bets on GM Crops for India's Second Green Revolution

On a fenced plot not far from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home, a field of mustard is in full yellow bloom, representing his government's reversal of an effective ban on field trials of genetically modified (GM) food crops.

The GM mustard planted in the half-acre field in the grounds of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi is in the final stage of trials before the variety is allowed to be sold commercially, and that could come within two years, scientists associated with the project say.

India placed a moratorium on GM aubergine in 2010 fearing the effect on food safety and biodiversity. Field trials of other GM crops were not formally halted, but the regulatory system was brought to a deadlock.

But allowing GM crops is critical to Modi's goal of boosting dismal farm productivity in India, where urbanization is devouring arable land and population growth will mean there are 1.5 billion mouths to feed by 2030 - more even than China.

Starting in August last year, his government resumed the field trials for selected crops with little publicity.

Field trials are already on because our mandate is to find out a scientific review, a scientific evaluation," Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar told Reuters last week.

"Confined, safe field trials are on. It's a long process to find out whether it is fully safe or not."

Modi was a supporter of GM crops when he was chief minister of Gujarat state over a decade ago, the time when GM cotton was introduced in the country and became a huge success. Launched in 2002, Bt cotton, which produces its own pesticide, is the country's only GM crop and covers 95 percent of India's cotton cultivation of 11.6 million hectares (28.7 million acres). From being a net importer, India has become the world's second-largest producer and exporter of the fiber.

However, grassroots groups associated with Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have opposed GM crops because of the reliance on seeds patented by multinationals. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch, a nationalist group which promotes self-reliance, has vowed to hold protests if GM food crops are made commercially available.

"There is no scientific evidence that GM enhances productivity," said Pradeep, a spokesman for the group. "And in any case, why should we hand over our agriculture to some foreign companies?"

REUTERS/Anindito Mukherjee



An Indian scientist points to a patch of genetically modified (GM) rapeseed crop

Second Green Revolution

Largely agricultural India became self-sufficient in foodgrains after the launch of the Green Revolution in the 1960s, when it introduced high-yielding seed varieties and the use of fertilizer and irrigation.

The challenge now is to replicate that success in edible oils and vegetables, which are increasingly in demand.

India imports about 60 percent of its edible oil needs at an annual cost of up to \$10 billion - its third-biggest import item after crude oil and gold.

The trials of the mustard plant, which provides the highest yield of all oilseeds, are being led by Delhi University researchers headed by Deepak Pental, a scientist who returned to India in 1985 from Britain. He has said that he has developed a transgenic mustard strain that raises output by up to 30 percent but that further trials were halted after the moratorium.

The federal environment ministry began approving GM field trials in August, although applicants need to seek no-objection certificates from states where the trials are to be conducted.

States ruled by the BJP are spearheading the trials: Last month, Maharashtra gave the all-clear to open field trials of rice, chickpeas, corn and aubergine, as well as new varieties of cotton.

Punjab, ruled jointly by the BJP and a local party, gave the go-ahead for mustard in October followed next month by Delhi, then indirectly run by the federal government in the absence of a local government.

"The (federal) government is, for a change, being decisive," Pental said, adding his mustard strain could be ready to be released for commercial farming in a year or two.

Environmental group Greenpeace however remains opposed.

"The current government's rush with open field trials without addressing the fundamental loopholes in the regulatory mechanism is a matter for serious concern," said Manvendra Singh Inaniya, a campaigner for Greenpeace India.

"This leaves us vulnerable to contamination with untested and potentially hazardous GM food. We urge the Union Government to roll back approvals given to open air field trials of GM crops."

Additional reporting by Rupam Jain Nair and Meenakshi Sharma



More Voices in Africa are calling for Increased Biotech Adoption

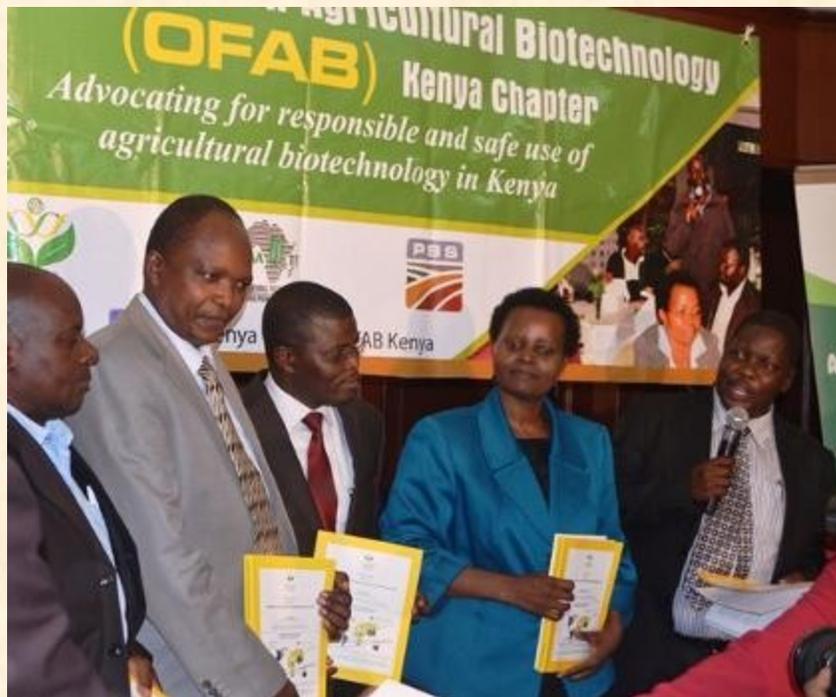
More African stakeholders are calling for increased adoption of GM crops to benefit farmers in the continent. During the recent launch of ISAAA's 2014 report on commercialized biotech crops, stakeholders in Burkina Faso and Kenya including policy makers, farmers and academicians said that the reported benefits should be enjoyed by the African farmers as well. In Burkina Faso, the new Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Jean-Noel Poda reiterated the commitment by the country to use biotechnology, which has already given considerable benefits to farmers and the country.

"A recent study by Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (INERA), the country's agricultural research institute, showed that Bt cotton farmers gained about 31% yield increase," said Dr. Poda. He added that thanks to Bt cotton, Burkina Faso is the number one country in cotton production in West Africa with 700,000 tonnes produced per year.

Crop Biotech Update



Dr Maxine Compaore—Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology speaking to the media



Dr Pukose, extreme right, launching the ISAAA report with other stakeholders in Kenya

Crop Biotech Update

Upcoming
EventsUpcoming
EventsUpcoming
Events

Pollinator Issue Team meeting, Washington	March 3
CropLife Cameroon AGM, Douala, Cameroon	March 06
Africa Partners & Stakeholders' Meeting on Biosafety Capacity Development, Maputo, Mozambique	March 10-12
RRC Meeting, Casablanca, Morocco	March 10
Maghreb Regulatory Meeting	March 11-12
CropLife Ghana AGM, Accra, Ghana	March 13
CropLife South Africa AGM, Midrand, South Africa	March 17
Container Management Project Team Meeting	March 18
ICCO Consultative Board Meeting, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire	March 23
Meeting with DRCQIPA, Cameroon, Yaoundé	March 25
CropLife Kenya AGM, Nairobi, Kenya	March 27
CropLife Mauritius AGM, Port Louis, Mauritius	March 27
IP M / RU Project Team Meeting, Brussels	April 8
Stewardship Steering Committee, Brussels	April 9
Special mission to Ethiopia (SSP projects)	April 13-17
Hub and Regulatory Meeting, WCA, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire	May 5-6
Training of Dealers, Applicators and Stockists: CropLife Cote d'Ivoire	May 18-22
Meeting of the Obsolete Stocks Project Team, Brussels	May 20



Photo: Courtesy
USAID



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GROWING FOOD – CREATING RENEWABLES – SUPPLYING SUSTAINABLY

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