

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

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Global Agricultural Information Network

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Agricultural Biotechnology Annual - Addendum

Capacity Building and Outreach

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Report Highlights:

This addendum accompanies the 2017 Agricultural Biotechnology Annual, and lists 2017 capacity building and/or outreach activities that relate to plant and animal biotechnologies.

FAS/Nairobi's goal is to reverse the ban on genetically engineered (GE) products ban, and to support commercialization, and trade of GE crops and products. Kenya and the east African region countries are keen on adopting modern GE technology. However, the technology is surrounded by a lot of misinformation. Therefore, Post needs to continue educating and creating public awareness to a wide range of different stakeholders to ease adoption and acceptability.

CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY Addendum

CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

a. ACTIVITIES

FAS/Nairobi, using U.S. government funds have carried out the following genetic engineering (GE) technology capacity and outreach activities to advance awareness, understanding, and appreciation in Kenya in 2017. Find 2016 outreach activities at: [Capacity Building and Outreach](#)

Under the Cochran Fellowship Program, two Kenyans, the Chief Biosafety Officer at Kenya's National Biosafety Authority (NBA) and an Inspection Officer at Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) joined a team of five from Ghana to participate in a Biotechnology Communications course, May 8 – 20, 2017 at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). The training focused on various strategies of biotechnology communication as a tool in overall biotechnology risk management. At our request, American Soybean Association (ASA) through their subsidiary, World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) purchased the international air tickets for the two Kenyans.

Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs/New Technologies and Production Methods Division (OASA/NTPMD) funded Dr. Kayode Sanni, agricultural research scientist to speak at the 2017 AGOA Forum in Togo, August 8-10, 2017. Dr. Kayode's presentation focused on Nitrogen-Use Efficient, Water-Use Efficient, and Salt-Tolerant (NEWEST), a project directed by African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF).

OASA/NTPMD also sponsored Dr. Jan-Hendrick (Hennie) Groenewald from South Africa to give a key note address at the 6th Annual National Biosafety Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, October 3 – 6, 2017.

USDA/FAS Emerging Markets Program (EMP) grant to Cornell University in 2017 supported four Kenyans and one Tanzanian to participate in the Cornell Alliance for Science Leadership course at the Ithaca September 16 – 23, 2017. The participants represented farmer organizations, research, and academia.

OAS/NTPMD partially funded the FAO Regional Meeting on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa, November 22 – 24, 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The International Agri-Food Network (IAFN), elected focal point and secretariat for the Private Sector Mechanism of the UN Committee on Food Security, and the lead event organizer sponsored five Kenyans to attend the meeting. FAS/Nairobi's Regional Agricultural Counselor, and the Agricultural Marketing Specialist, also attended the meeting as observers. Generally, the participants appreciated and supported the various agricultural technologies developed over time. There were a few policy makers from other countries who either exhibited caution or misunderstanding, especially when it comes to establishing a national biosafety protocol for their respective countries. Somehow some policy makers are not convinced that a biosafety protocol is enough to ensure safety for consumers. The need for more

communication and outreach was expressed by different stakeholders at the conference, including having a more unified messaging throughout Africa. Some of the apprehension was also expressed that there could be disagreement among respective national government health, and food safety agencies over which has the final say in regulating genetic engineering. Unfortunately, reference to Precautionary Principal was also raised once but we believe that it was out of a lack of understanding. The experienced members in the conference handled these types of responses effectively.

a. **NEXT STEPS**

Agricultural Biotechnology training is one of the priority research training topics for 2018 Borlaug Fellowship Program. Post expects the fellowship program to train at least two agricultural research scientists from Kenya.

Together with key partners in agricultural biotechnology awareness promotion, Post plans to organize a Bt. cotton study tour to India for the government appointed task-force to fast-track commercialization of Bt. cotton.

Post also expects OASA/NTPMD to support delegates from African countries to attend the Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP/MOP9), meeting in 2018, and related preparatory meetings. Conference delegates negotiate for a favorable environment for advancing GE technology, and provide technical back-up for the negotiations of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

FAS/Nairobi will continue work with pro-biotech organizations such as the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Kenya University Biotechnology Consortium (KUBICO), Agricultural Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum (ABSF), and the government to:

- Promote public awareness on GE in agriculture and biosafety; and to
- Manage and strengthen research, development of GE products, and trade.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY Addendum CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

a. **ACTIVITIES**

OASA/NTPMD together with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation sponsored nine participants from the East African region that included six Kenyans to attend the Third International Workshop for Regulation of Animal Biotechnology, June 26 – 30, 2017 at Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. One LES staff accompanied the participants. The other participants came from Uganda (2) and Malawi (1). Participants were drawn from the lead regulatory agencies on biotechnology, agricultural research organizations, non-governmental institutions such as ISAAA and African Biosafety Network of Experts (ABNE).

On Jan. 18th and 19th, 2017, OASA/NTPMD partially funded an animal biotech workshop that focused on the “Mzima Cow: Theory of Change” held in Nairobi, Kenya at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) Campus. Other supporters of the workshop included ILRI and John Templeton Foundation - Genetics for Africa project.

a. NEXT STEPS

FAS/Nairobi will continue to assist Kenya and the east African region further animal biotechnology research and develop the relevant regulations.

OASA/NTPMD will fund a follow-up workshop on the “Mzima Cow” project on February 26th and 28th, 2018 at the ILRI Campus in Nairobi, Kenya. Following the workshop will be a view/assessment of Kenya draft biotechnology regulations on animals, February 28 – March 1, 2018 at the same venue.