

**REPORT ON
KENYA SMALL-HOLDER FARMERS' BIOTECHNOLOGY STUDY VISIT TO
SOUTH AFRICA FROM 19TH -23RD APRIL, 2015**

Report Prepared by



Doris Anjawa

ROP Field Coordinator

Email: drsanjawa@gmail.com

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) in collaboration with Africa-Bio organized for Biotechnology study visit programme for small-holder farmers in South Africa. This programme took place at Sheraton Hotel, in Pretoria from 19th to 23rd April, 2015. Doris Anjawa and Edina Makunda represented Rural Outreach Africa Organization. We had other representatives from National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya Cereal millers Association, Seed company like Simlaw, various farmers from Machakos, Nyanza and Rift valley, Media group from Standard, KBC, Citizen, Nation media and AATF field staff's . Total number of delegation from Kenya were 30 people who were sponsored by AATF and Africa-Bio.

- On the first day we were taken through theory on farmers to understand biotechnology and GMO as a whole on various crops and value addition with the South African farmers and expertise.
- It was reported that Smallholder farmers makes an important contribution to food production in South Africa- and thus increasingly in-need of better farming methods to boost their yields. In return farmers can ensure higher incomes to better cater for the needs of their families. Most farmers have found the answer on growing GM Maize. Genes in GM maize have been altered, giving specific new traits such as resistance to pests, diseases, weeds and even drought tolerance.
- Maize seed with built in insect -resistance (Bt) and herbicide tolerance (HT) for weed control, have been developed and released for use by farmers.
- GMO's are covered by environmental and health related legislation ensuring that GMO's are safe for the environment, animals and human consumption. South Africa approved the Bt maize for human consumption and animal feed in 1998.

LESSONS LEARNT

- From the theory and field visits that we made, Biotechnology is very good on encouraging farmers to be involved in it due to better production of the crops and good yield as well.
- The allegations that GMOs are not safe for animals fed GM food show serious health problems including cancers, allergies, damage to organs especially the kidneys and liver, birth defects and reduced fertility is untrue because Biotech crops are amongst the most extensively tested, characterized and regulated food and fibre products ever developed. All biotech crops currently approved for commercialization world-wide have been thoroughly assessed by scientific and regulatory authorities throughout the world for, feed and environmental safety according to internationally agreed guidelines and principles. Food produced from biotech crops have been found to be as wholesome, nutritious and as safe as conventional crops and foods.
- In addition to the scientific reviews among regulatory agencies world-wide supporting GM foods are safe we also have Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization, the European Commission, the French Academy of Medicine, the American Medical Association etc.
- Monsanto is known as the leader in agricultural biotechnology even though there are many other role players world-wide, i.e. Bayer, Syngenta, Dow and BASF.
- GMOs will save small-scale farmers with resistance to insects which can make a difference. Herbicide tolerant maize also allows farmers to control weeds chemically instead of mechanically (i.e. by hand), making it much easier to control weeds.

We visited various farmer' farms practicing Biotechnology like farmers planting (Bt) maize, (Bt) cotton, (Bt) soy-beans. All Bt crops have very high yields than those planted conventionally.



On the arrival day at Johannesburg airport in readiness to check in the bus to the hotel



Doris with Paloma Fernandes who is an Executive Officer of Cereal Millers Association, standing outside our hotel of resident in preparation to go to the field



After arriving in the field to meet and interact with other farmers and see their GMO crops



A 50 hectare farm of Bt Cotton farm owned by one farmer being admired by all of us



Bt Cotton farm



South African women preparing GMO food in the field for participants



Very delicious GMO Food prepared with farmers in the field for all the visitors from Kenya



Having lunch together with the South African farmers



Monsanto officer showing the performance of GMO Cotton crop compared to the other conventional crop



Being shown the difference between Bt Cotton and ordinary cotton crop performance



In a lady farmer's home seeing her cotton harvesting machine which she purchased from the good yields she got