

PARLIAMENT
OF KENYA

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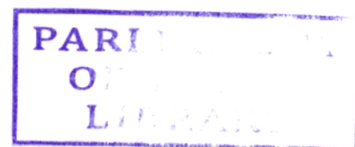
14/3/17

15th December, 2016

FARMERS PETITION

From: Nandi County Farmer Groups

- To:**
1. Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
 2. Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
 3. Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health
 4. Speaker of the National Assembly
 5. Speaker of the Senate
 6. Director General, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)



WE DEMAND IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO BIOTECH CROPS TO MITIGATE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND REDUCE CROP LOSSES DUE TO PESTS AND DISEASES.

We the undersigned representatives of farmers from Nandi County and members of Cereal Growers Association (CGA) do recall that in 2015, we submitted our views to the National Biosafety Authority (NBA) in support of the environmental release of stem-borer resistant Maize variety following an application by the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock research organization (KALRO).

Whereas we were hopeful that access to this maize would help us to control the target pest which continues to ravage our crops, especially after the NBA approved the application; we are deeply concerned that the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has refused to grant KALRO the environmental impact assessment report permit so that it can complete the research, citing a cabinet ban on the importation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) foods into the country.

We the farmers are convinced that the insect protected maize is safe for human consumption because it has been safely grown, eaten and sold by farmers in many countries, including South Africa, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, among others, for over 25 years.

Besides, for decades we have trusted KALRO products to be safe, beneficial and productive and have no reason to doubt them now.

In our view, agricultural biotechnology has an important role to play in improve food production by dealing more effectively and sustainably with various challenges facing farming in the country, including pests and diseases. Farmers should therefore have the right to add products of agricultural biotechnology to their existing options that are currently in use and remain at their disposal. The maize stock borer, for example, remains a major pest in maize production, causing us millions of shillings in damages.

As farmers, we find it hard to believe why the same government is pulling in different direction on application of biotechnology to improve agriculture. Whereas we expect the government to show leadership and be in the forefront pushing for adoption of GM crops to help mitigate the devastating impacts of climate change, pests and diseases, it is bickering over safety of a crop that has been grown and consumed for years without any adverse effects to human, animal and environmental health.

In conclusion, we would like to appeal to the relevant authorities, especially Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Parliament and the President to alleviate our suffering by immediately:

1. Fast-tracking the process of completing research on insect resistant maize and other products so that they can be released to the farmers to help mitigate impacts of climate change and improve food security.
2. Lifting the GMO import ban because it has no basis.

In summary, we believe that farmers have a right to access the latest smart agricultural technologies that would give them the best chance for enhanced productivity and improved livelihoods.

We look forward to your feedback.

Thank you.
