Building Functional Biosafety Systems in Africa
Forum on Global Agricultural & Forestry Program. November 13, 2013 Ghent, Belgium
Challenges Faced by African Farmers –

Low Productivity

Impacting Food and Nutritional Security

Photo Credit: IITA, ICRISAT
Biotechnology can Contribute to Improving Agricultural Productivity
Current Status of GM Crops in Africa

- GM Commercialized Crops: 4
- CFTs and Biosafety Laws: 7
- CFTs without Biosafety Laws: 2
- Biosafety Laws without CFTs: 10
- No Biosafety Laws or CFTs: 32

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Regulatory Barriers to Development and Delivery of Biotech Crops

- Inter-ministerial turf-lack of harmonisation.
- Limited operational budget
- Biosafety law not reconciled with existing laws

- Too focused on risks; not reflect global experience.
- Non-science elements, socioeconomic issues
- Strict liability
- RA requirements out of sync with product dev.
- Regulations are typically unaffordable & unenforceable.
- National vs. regional conflicts

- Expensive infrastructure for CFTs
- Trade issues

- Limited critical mass of experts- opportunity for loud voices & influencers
- Opposing views of development partners

NEPAD – TRANSFORMING AFRICA
ABNE Service Network

Established under the recommendations from "Freedom to Innovate" through a consultative process

ABNE Mandate: to build functional biosafety systems in Africa
ABNE Target Audience and Services

Our Target Audience – Regulators
- Members of National Biosafety Committees (NBCs)
- Members of Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs)
- Plant Quarantine officers (PQs)

Our Services Empower Regulators Through
- Technical support
- Training and education (workshops, short biosafety courses, e-biosafety, internships, study tours)
- Information resources
- Networking and linkages
- Policy alignment
ABNE’s Initial Focus Countries

Selection Criteria:
- Political will
- Technological readiness
- Ongoing biotechnology R&D
- National Biosafety framework in place
- NBCs receiving biosafety applications for permits

- Burkina Faso
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Togo
In 2012-2013 cotton production increased by 57.5% due to increase in adoption.
### What we have done for African regulators

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ABNE Activities</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>Workshops, study tours, internships, short courses, professional meetings, forums, etc.</td>
<td>380 (70%)</td>
<td>165 (30%)</td>
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<td><strong>Total number of regulators served</strong></td>
<td>545 (2012)</td>
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What we have done to build confidence to African regulators in decision making

1. Policies and regulations to promote safe development, diffusion, and adoption of agricultural GMOs
2. Risk assessment techniques and their application to inform decision-making
3. Training to improve critical mass of regulators with enhanced competencies in biosafety regulation
4. Enhanced biosafety communication and cooperation
5. Exposing regulators to best practices
Conclusion

Sustainability of GMOs in Africa will require:
- policy direction;
- leadership by govt. agencies to maintain & enforce biosafety compliance;
- on-going research by agric. scientists to monitor & assess GMO performance and insect resistance development;
- a strong extension network to deliver training & info to producers as appropriate;
- Unfair trade issues & the European factor settled;
- If Bt cotton *success is sustained* in Burkina it will serve as a gateway to the future introduction and dev’t of other biotech crops in Africa; having demonstrated the scientific, legal & business infrastructures for GMOs in Africa.
Demand for services & Resources

Emerging Countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Senegal, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Benin, etc.

Demand greater than resources

Thank You
Visit us at www.nepadbiosafety.net