

Questions and Answer about GMOs

What is GMO crop?

The word GMO in full is Genetically Modified Organism. GMO is a name given to any crop developed by experts when they use new approaches of crop improvement. Such crops are aimed at helping farmers overcome problems that affect crops like disease, pests, weeds and drought. They use their advanced knowledge to do this, by improving indigenous crops to perform better.

Why are Agricultural experts developing GMOs

GMO technology (biotechnology) provides Agricultural experts with a new way of coming up with new varieties of crops within a short period of time compared with the old ways they have been using. It also helps the Agricultural experts to address problems that the old ways could not address with ease.

How do Agricultural Experts produce GM crops?

GMO technology (biotechnology) is a means by which agricultural scientists using their expert knowledge pick a good quality from one crop and transfer it to another crop in a way that would not be possible if they were using the old breeding methods.

Who produce GM crops

GM crops are produced by Agricultural Experts across the world in many developed and some developing countries. In Uganda GMOs are being produced by scientists at Universities such as Makerere University and those from NARO institutes such as NARL, Kawanda, NaCRRI, Namulonge and NaSARRI, Serere.

Where are GM crops currently grown?

Currently, several countries are growing GM crops. These countries are: Sudan, Burkina Faso, South Africa, America (USA), Brazil, Argentina, Canada, India, China, Paraguay, Pakistan, Philippines, Myanmar, Mexico, Spain, Columbia, Honduras, Portugal, Costa Rica, Romania, and Slovakia. In Uganda, GMO are under research in research stations in Kawanda, Namulonge, Serere, Kasese, and Kachwekano in Kabale. In Uganda GM crops under research are rice, cassava, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, maize, and banana. They are not yet with farmers but still at research stage.

How will GM crops help farmers?

Depending on what qualities the agricultural experts have imparted on the GM crop, it may be able to yield higher, be resistant to pests and diseases or weeds or it may be tolerate drought, floods or may perform well in poor soils.



Are GM crops appropriate for countries that are still growing like Uganda?

GMOs are appropriate for countries that are still developing like Uganda in the same way they are appropriated for countries that have already developed. In Uganda, GMOs will help farmers overcome problems of diseases in Cassava and Banana, and will also help resist some pests in Maize and Cotton. Some GMOs make management of weeds much easier whereby you can spray a herbicide and they survive the herbicide. These good qualities will be very beneficial to farmers, as they will have higher yields and cleaner harvests, at reduced losses.

Is there any risk associated with growing or eating GMOs

Growing or eating GMO does not have any risk. Before, the Government gives out GMO for growing by farmers, several experts and leaders in Government scrutinize every aspect of GMO including its safety so that when they are given out to farmers, it is the same as what farmers have been producing. The only difference will be that GMO will resist diseases or pests, weeds or drought.

Are all GMOs the same?

No. Every GMO is produced to address a given challenge or issue in a crop. For example, one GMO could be produced for resistance to a disease and another for drought tolerance.

Where can one get information on GMOs?

This information can be found from different NARO institutes or the addresses given below:

1. **Uganda Biosciences information centre,
National Crops Resources Research Institute, Namulonge,
Tel: +256414320325,
Email ubic.nacri@gmail.com
www.ugandabic.org**
2. **Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development (SCIFODE)
Tel +256392833315
Email admin@scifode.foundation.org
www.scifode.foundation.org**