



NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE AND PLACING ON THE MARKET OF BT MAIZE VARIETIES IN KENYA

The National Biosafety Authority (NBA) is a State Corporation established under the Biosafety Act, No.2 of 2009, to exercise general supervision and control over the transfer, handling and use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) with a view to ensuring safety of human and animal health and provision of adequate protection of the environment.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Biosafety Act, 2009 and the Biosafety (Environmental Release) Regulations, 2011, NBA hereby notifies the public that it has received an application for environmental release or open field cultivation, and placing on the market of genetically modified maize (*Zea mays*) commonly known as Bt maize (MON 89034). This application, was jointly submitted by the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF).

The Bt maize has been developed using modern biotechnology methods to protect itself against specific pests such as the maize stem borers and fall armyworms, which are devastating pests in maize fields. According to the application documents, farmers can expect less damage to their maize crop, which may lead to increased yields and better grains quality. This could also lower production costs and reduce risks to health and the environment by using fewer insecticides used for pest management.

In line with Kenya's Biosafety Act of 2009, NBA is currently assessing this Bt maize to ensure that it is safe for human and animal consumption as well as being safe to our environment. The safety assessment process is being undertaken in collaboration with other Government Agencies and Biosafety experts to ensure that the Bt maize is as safe as other cultivated non-GMO maize varieties grown by farmers. Additional evaluations being undertaken include socio-economic impact assessments related to the Bt maize varieties.

It is further underscored that if the Authority approves the environmental release and open cultivation of Bt maize, further testing shall be conducted to assess its agronomic performance under different agro-ecological maize growing zones in Kenya, in accordance with the *Seeds and Plant Varieties Act*, which dictates that all new crops undergo mandatory variety testing in National Performance Trials (NPTs) before farmers can grow them. If approved, the Authority shall also undertake post-commercialization monitoring of the Bt maize varieties for the entire duration of the approval period to ensure compliance to Biosafety laws.

Before making a decision on the application, the Authority now seeks public inputs on the proposed environmental release or open cultivation and placement on the market of Bt maize varieties in Kenya. Members of the public are invited to submit their comments in writing within **30 days** of this announcement.

The Authority has published on its website, www.biosafetykenya.go.ke; the summary of the Bt maize Application, Guidelines on public participation, and the Public participation form for submitting their comments. More information on the application can be accessed physically from the NBA offices during normal working hours in the contact address below.

Please send your written comments by Mail to:

**Chief Executive Officer
National Biosafety Authority
P O Box 28251-00100
Nairobi**

Tel: 020 2678667 / 0713 854132

Or

By Email: btmaize@biosafetykenya.go.ke