Editor's note

Pass the law on biotechnology

For six years, the Bill to regulate agriculture biotechnology has been tossed around in Parliament. Biotechnology is being used to address problems in agricultural production and processing. They include plant breeding, to raise and stabilise yields, improving resistance against pests, disease and abiotic stresses, such as drought and cold, as well as enhancing the nutritional content of food. While touring the Jinja farmers' show last week, President Yoweri Museveni asked Parliament to expedite the passing of the Bill.

The President pointed out that scientists had done their job in research in biotechnology.

Most biotechnology research in crop production has been done at the National Agricultural Research Organisation's laboratories in Kawanda, Wakiso district. They are also hosting trials of the sigatoka-resistant genetically modified bananas. These have been engineered to be resistant to bacterial wilt and the black sigatoka fungal disease.

The capacity to handle genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in terms of laboratory infrastructure and human resources in various fields of biotechnology is being developed, with funding from many sources.

The delay in approving the national biotechnology and biosafety policy has slowed the pace of the development of biotechnology, leaving Uganda at crossroads. The Act will not only allow the adoption of these technologies, but provide control and regulation over their adoption. At the moment, many supermarkets have genetically modified products, but then, there



Joshua Kato
Editor

jkato@newvision.co.ug

CamScanner