

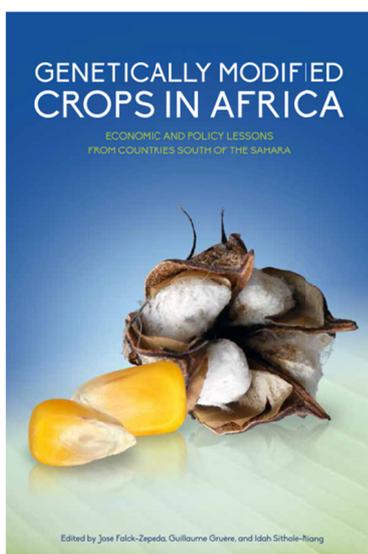
Book Review: *Genetically Modified Crops in Africa: Economic and Policy Lessons from Countries South of the Sahara*

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Genetically Modified Crops in Africa: Economic and Policy Lessons from Countries South of the Sahara

Edited by José Falck-Zepeda, Guillaume Gruère, and Idah Sithole-Niang.

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Genetically Modified Crops in Africa is an inside look into various economic and policies as it relates to the adaptation of GMO technology in Africa. The book presents various hindrances and the feelings of farmers/government towards genetically modified crops technology while at the same time provide scientific evidence for the safe adaptation with the view of significantly increasing the agricultural value in Africa. The book editors José Falck-Zepeda, Guillaume Gruère, and Idah Sithole-Niang are seasoned researchers and are well experienced in aspect of GM technology.

This book tries to present a balanced proposition on the need for beneficial discussion regarding the introduction of GE crops and technologies to Africa. The book presents the different views of researchers on the subject of genetically modification through various scientific articles. The presentations try to provide answers to issues like the cost implication, benefits and the associated risks of existing and future GE crops and technologies in Africa. The book also presents on case to case basis the roles of government agencies towards the adaptation of GE technologies in African countries.

African countries belong to under developing class and the state of agricultural development is tremendously low. Introduction of genetically engineered crops and technology to Africa is at starting stage with only about four (4) countries currently engaged in commercial planting of GE crops. Some of the constraints come from the opposing voices against the technology. The book is coming out at the time when some African countries are contemplating of signing and adopting various Bio-Safety rules and framework for the possible release of GE crops and

technology. The style of book is analytical and non-judgmental. It presents the experiences of countries that have adopted the GMO technology and the impact of the technology to the overall economy of such countries.

The book provides basis for the critical re-evaluation of government policies towards GE crops and technology. This book begins with the demonstration of the socioeconomic and farm level effect of GM crops using South Africa's Bt crops as a case study. The Bt technology in some crops like maize was beneficial to both larger scale farmers and small holders' farmers. The Bt seed technology according to the authors on page 38 is just a production tool and hence cannot be able to overcome institutional failure and governance challenges that seems endemic in African agriculture. The limitations are reasons for the slight failure in Bt cotton adaptation in South Africa.

The chapters of the book deals on various GE crops related issues on socioeconomic relevance of GE crops as in the case of GE banana in Uganda, the impact of Bio-Safety regulation towards adoption of GMO policies; the negative angle to the delay in acceptance of GM crops and the adoption approach of either the American method or European method for implementation of GE policies. The chapters also outline the inherent opportunities offered by GM crops, the attending challenges, the implication for funding of GE technology, the risk record of the GE crops release and the implication for the future. The need for foreign partnership in developing Africa agricultural potential through GE crops technologies.

The authors have significantly justified the approach adopted in meeting the purpose of this book. Scientific evidences have been provided to address the introduction of GE crops and technology to Africa. There is need to involve GE crops technology in the efforts to eradicate poverty in Africa through a strong agricultural policies.

This book is recommended for the following.

A) Government agencies: - lack of information on the appropriate evaluation technique for accessing GE crops for possible risk has greatly affected its adoption rate and in turn negatively affects the socioeconomic values of agriculture. There is urgent need for the government to be aware of the various aspects of the GE crops and technology so as to make adequate funding for such technology available.

B) Student/ Academic communities: - future researchers on GE technology can only be possible when previous findings are brought to the knowledge of students. This book has provided scientific evidences of findings on GE crops and technologies. It is expected that this book will motivate students to conduct further researches and also try to develop some new traits of GE crops that will add peculiar problems that affect agriculture in Africa.

C) General public: - the book provides insight for correcting some of the negative perceptions among people that GE crops and technologies are deadly. The technology is as good as ancient/traditional breeding but the different is that its method is precise and addresses a particular issue/problems relating to agriculture. The scientific articles provided will address this brief.

About the book authors

José Falck-Zepeda is a senior research fellow at IFPRI who focus on the economics and impact assessment of biotechnology, biosafety, and emerging technologies.

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