



**CropLife Africa Middle East Board Meeting and General Assembly 2020**

CropLife Africa Middle East held its first Board Meeting and General Assembly on 12 May via video conferencing as a result of “lockdowns” in most countries. The meeting was under the chairmanship of the President, Dirk Hartmann.

The following Directors were re-elected for a further term of two years:

- Dirk Hartmann as President of CropLife Africa Middle East.

Vice Presidents and Hub Chairs:

- Jerome Barbaron: Vice President and Hub Chair for West and Central Africa.
- Georges Kassis: Vice President and Hub Chair for North Africa and Middle East.
- Marcel Dreyer was elected Vice President and Hub Chair for East and Southern Africa (first election).

The Executive Committee remains unchanged with the addition of Maher Belaich as the new representative for NUFARM SAS Highlights of the meeting included:

- On financials, the association received a clean audit from Ernst and Young covering the 2019 accounts.
- The Annual Report for 2019 was approved by the Board.
- The strategic Plan for 2021-2023 was discussed with the Board and the CL AME team received the way forward to complete the strategic review.
- The approach of CL AME to pursue its mission during the COVID-19 crisis was shared and appreciated by the Board members.
- Discussion on the Status of Locust and FAW invasions in the E & SA region and the actions taken by CL AME.
- Digitalization in the outreach of Stewardship messaging in Africa Middle East together with an update on the pilot project.
- An update on activism in the region and the anti-counterfeiting activities during the COVID-19 crisis was provided.

**Samira Amellal - DG CropLife AME**



Dirk Hartmann  
President of CL AME



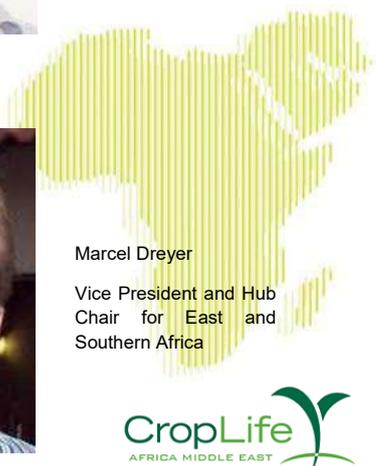
Jerome Barbaron  
Vice President and Hub Chair for West and Central Africa



Georges Kassis  
Vice President and Hub Chair for North Africa and Middle East



Marcel Dreyer  
Vice President and Hub Chair for East and Southern Africa



## CropLife AME Statement on the Locust Situation in East Africa

The Greater Horn of Africa is experiencing a massive desert locust upsurge as more swarms' form and mature in northern and central Kenya, southern Ethiopia and in Somalia. The invasion has spread to eight countries – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. with the risk of this spreading to the Sahel region if it's not contained by July.

There are reports that indicate the locusts have caused up to 100% crop loss in Somalia affecting staple crops of maize and sorghum. In Kenya, up to 30% of pastureland has been lost affecting the livelihoods of the pastoral communities. To imagine the extent of damage, it's believed that the locusts can travel up to 150km per day with a swarm covering 1 square kilometre containing 40 to 80 million insects, and because the desert locust consumes its own weight in vegetation every day, a swarm can eat the same amount of food in one day as approximately 35,000 people, posing a serious threat to both crops, grazing land and hunger.

Control and surveillance operations are being led by national governments of affected countries and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA), with FAO providing support in the form of pesticides, biopesticides, equipment, aircraft and training. This support will enable the control of one million ha of infested farmland and rangeland, protect the livelihoods of 110,000 households, and assist with providing information and coordination to stakeholders across the region, according to FAO.

Over 365,000 ha have been controlled to date, of which an estimated 20 percent was infested by hopper bands and 80 percent by swarms. Control of the locusts became critical in January due to weather conditions that were unusually conducive to the spread of the pest. Cyclone Pawan made landfall in early December 2019, flooding the Horn of Africa creating favourable breeding conditions for the desert locust. According to experts, prolonged and exceptionally wet weather was the primary culprit, causing hundreds of billions of the locusts, to thrive.



### The Locust Situation in East Africa Cont.

A Desert Locust plague is a rare event, and global stocks of control equipment and products is limited. Use of pesticides (bio pesticides and conventional pesticides) was and continues to be the main method of control of the locusts, particularly the swarms. Procurement, delivery, internal transport, storage and disposal of unused pesticides is the most difficult part of managing a locust control campaign. According to FAO, this represents 50 percent of the total cost of the locust control intervention. The choice of pesticide depends greatly on context and conditions of the area to be treated. Historically this has been the prerogative of FAO. However, the pesticide industry claims that there has been reports of little involvement and a non-transparent process in procurement and that there must be dialogue in future for FAO to open up for new innovations and formulations. Ultra-low volume (ULV) formulated pesticides are primarily used in the control of locusts. The ULV pesticides reduce the amount of pesticide used and do not require mixing with water as a carrier.

What we see now is uncoordinated procurement – World Bank, FAO, Ministry of Agriculture and now brokers. Such a model will result in over purchase and will lead to build up of obsolete pesticides, use of brokers is also an avenue for counterfeit products to enter the market. Disappointingly, there is very minimal involvement of the industry in the procurement process and most supplies are being sought through brokers.

According to FAO, the situation still remains extremely alarming in East Africa where it is an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods since the timing coincides with the current growing season. FAO predicts the possibility of new swarms from current breeding grounds which will form from mid-June onwards, coinciding with the start of the harvest period. However, reports from the National Locust Control Centre points to that the current rains and change in wind direction currently flowing from south to north have pushed locust towards Turkana. Presently, there is a risk that swarms will migrate to the summer breeding areas along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border as well as to Sudan and perhaps West Africa.

In conclusion, we would like to suggest to FAO that they should provide a platform for industry whose role would be:

- to provide efficient support on the use and the management of pesticides through stewardship services.
- to provide information on products which have less impact on the environment. Currently, some brand owners are not aware that their products are being used in locust control and this might pose a problem in the future.

**Evelyn Lusena**



## Stewardship

### Evaluating Crop Protection Container Management Programs

Last year CropLife International requested Environmental Resources Management (ERM) to evaluate the crop protection industry's container management programs (CMPs) and to support the CropLife network in updating their internal documents promoting recycling as opposed to the destruction (by incineration or landfill) of collected containers. ERM focused on two areas that are considered key in promoting CMPs: the impact of a hazardous classification of PPP plastic containers collected, and the benefits of recycling as a more sustainable means of managing packaging; linking this to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### Evaluating Crop Protection Container Management Programs

Container management programs have successfully been implemented in many regions of the world – but further progress can be made – to increase the global coverage of such programs, to improve collection rates and to reduce the environmental footprint through greater re-cycling of used packaging.

Plastic waste is one of the significant environmental problems being faced, given the potential for lasting damage to the earth and its population. The use of virgin plastic for producing more packaging containers is growing and is expected to grow further due to the increasing global population. With approximately one-third of all used plastic 'leaking' into the environment, this has a major impact on the environment and in particular the marine environment.

#### Container Management Programs – How They Work

Collection schemes for empty crop protection containers currently operate in almost 60 countries around the world. Some of the most successful container management programs are based on multi stakeholder projects where every step of the container lifecycle is managed and key stakeholders are taking responsibility. Schemes have benefited from partnerships – with authorities, other industries and stakeholders. These types of local collaborations have helped grow existing programs by reducing costs, raising awareness and building knowledge between all the partners.

The organization of the schemes do face management issues in different parts of the world. The classification of containers as hazardous waste is one difficulty that has been faced. This issue has been overcome in many regions by requiring that containers be triple rinsed at the farm level.

There are opportunities for improvements: such as plastic recycling, which remains limited with an estimated 95% of plastic packaging material value being lost after its first use.

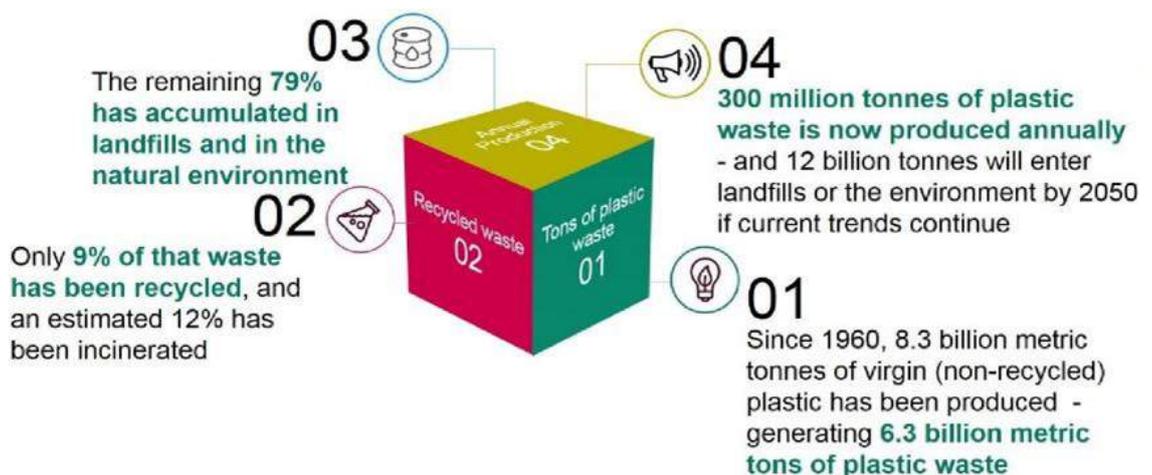
Although the volume of empty crop protection containers is only a small proportion of the total plastic and packaging waste, it needs to be managed correctly - to minimise the risk of pesticides and containers negatively affecting humans and the environment and to contribute to a more efficient plastic re-cycling system.

CropLife International and its members play a key role in managing container management programs and some of these schemes have been operating for more than 30 years

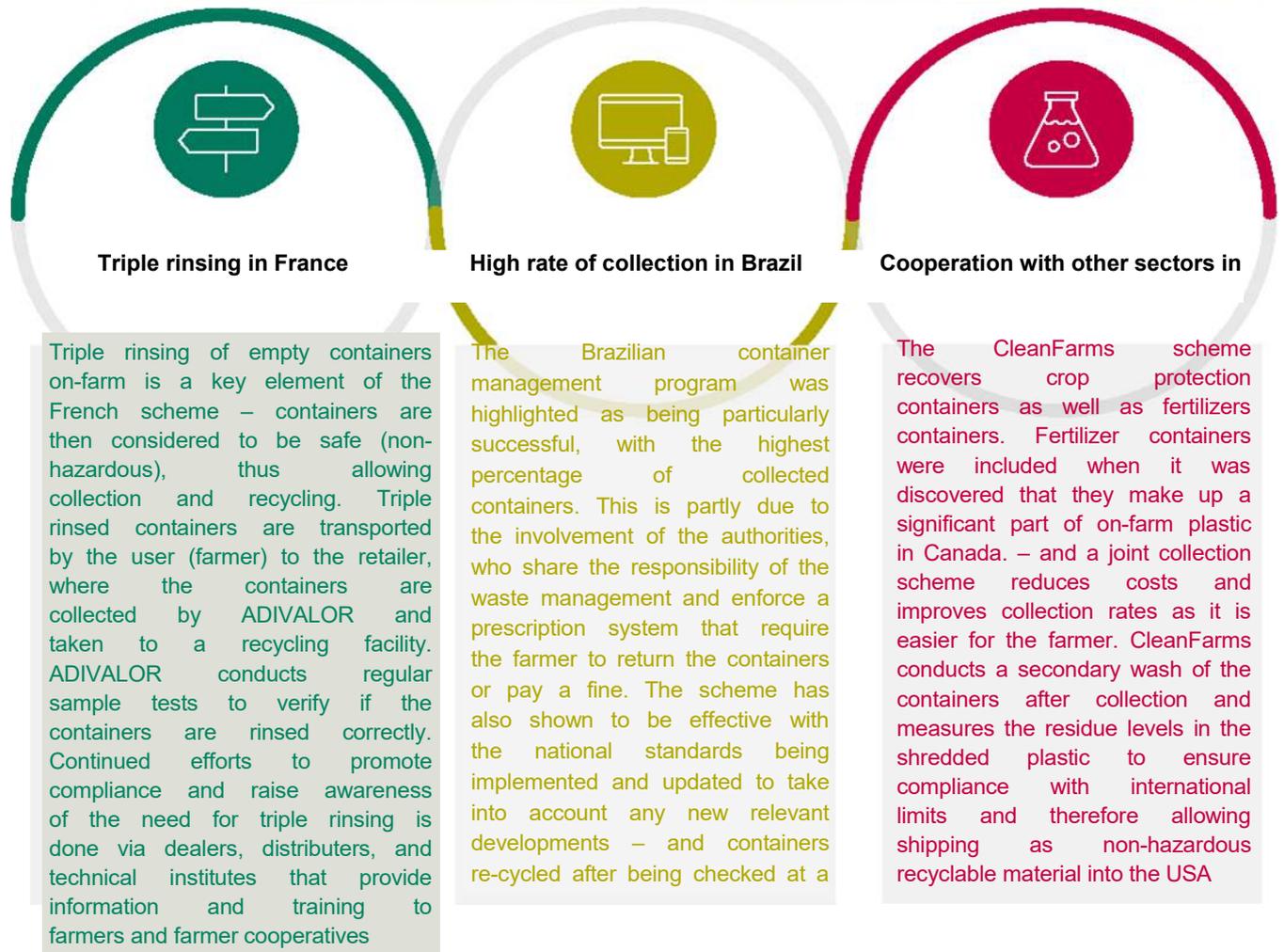
The use of triple rinsing has led to acceptance that used containers are safe to be transported and re-cycled, reducing the amount of plastic waste that is unnecessarily incinerated and enters landfill sites – and reducing the costs and the overall environmental footprint of used containers.

Training and awareness raising along the production chain are vital to promote container management programs and to ensure knowledge sharing between authorities and industry. In addition, there is a need to look at new approaches to raise awareness and increase the rate of collection and recycling of crop protection containers.

It is important that container management programs be cost effective for stakeholders. This includes simplifying the scheme - as the easier it is for farmers to return the empty containers the greater the recovery rate. There is also a need for engagement of all stakeholders to promote the schemes and ensure that they deal with the environmental and recycling challenges.



## Stewardship



### Removing barriers to the recycling of crop protection containers

Given the current challenges in managing plastic waste, a key target for authorities and industry must be to maximise the re-cycling of collected containers. In some cases, this will require national authorities to review their policies on how to deal with crop protection containers. Crop protection containers need to be considered as 'safe' (FAO/WHO recommend that countries should classify properly rinsed containers that have been inspected as non-hazardous.) to simplify the transport and re-cycling process and thus help reduce the costs of the management scheme. Triple rinsing is key to ensure that used crop protection containers can be considered as 'safe'. This also provides an incentive for farmers to rinse containers, resulting in an increased rate of collection of used containers.

*“Triple rinsing is key to ensure that used crop protection containers can be considered as ‘safe’ - to simplify the transport and re-cycling process.”*

It is therefore essential that training and education continue – in particular to ensure that farmers are aware of all the benefits: triple rinsing not only reduces the risk for users, the environment and the local community – it also has an economic benefit to the farmer ensuring that the crop protection product is not wasted.

While the importance of triple rinse from a safety & recycling viewpoint is vital, showing that the farmer has a benefit will also improve the understanding of why a farmer would want to triple rinse

Data on triple rinsing – shown to be

**99.99% effective**

Data on the ~~responsibility~~ <sup>residual</sup> of a wide range of packaging and formulations has been carried out by the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA, 2003). In an analysis of data from **180 rinsed containers**, an average rinsing effectiveness achieved using either manual triple rinsing or integrated pressure rinsing was 99.992% (leaving behind 0.008% w/w). From the data presented, it is considered reasonable to use a

**0.01% maximum rinsed residue**

figure – and for such containers that have been triple rinsed to be considered as **‘safe’ for transport and recycling!**

## Stewardship

### UN's Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

From an environmental and health perspective, moving away from the linear 'take-make-dispose' model of consumption and adopting a more circular approach are essential in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG12). In addition to improving resource efficiency, recycling would reduce negative externalities, such as greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 13), ocean pollution (SDG 14), health hazards for workers handling the containers (SDGs 3 and 8), and leakage in the natural environment (SDGs 3 and 6), especially in developing countries.

To fulfil the aims of the relevant Sustainability Development Goals, indicators need to be developed that will help all stakeholders to track progress.



UN's Sustainability Development Goals

*“Cooperation will be essential for the container management programs to achieve the target to increase the rate of collection and recycling of used containers”*

### Options for re-cycle and re-use



Plastic collected in container management programs can be

**re-cycled into a range of products.** While crop protection containers can be

re-used as **packaging** for new crop protection products, this is not a major use. The plastic is most commonly used in applications with lower demands due to some degradation of the properties of the material. But this still delivers many useful products such as **plant pots, outdoor furniture, fencing and fencing posts, garden decking, traffic bollards** as well as **road surfacing.**

*“There are many options for the use of re-cycled plastic from crop protection containers – let’s make sure that programs are in place to collect and process the material into use”*



## Stewardship

### Responsible use of pesticides during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CropLife Ghana conducted a live TV interview on the agricultural TV station “Akufo TV” on May 13. The aim was to sensitize the farming communities on numerous issues that the agricultural sector in the country is facing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the issues that were stressed upon was the availability of pesticides and other inputs to support crop production, the responsible use of pesticides and the awareness of counterfeit and other illegal pesticides on the market.

The delegation from CropLife Ghana for the talk comprised of Program Manager, Fred Boampong and Master Trainer, Uncle Bob plus Ken Nii Addy, an independent consultant in the agricultural sector.

The talk highlighted on the contribution of pesticides to sustainable agriculture, the need for sound pesticide regulations, safe handling and responsible use and the importance of PPE. Also covered was the ongoing empty container management and SSP programs to ensure effective and proper crop protection.

A focus point was on the increasing proliferation of counterfeit and other illegal pesticides in the country. This illegal activity impedes the sustainability of agricultural productivity through related health and environmental issues coupled with financial and socio-economic impact, thereby threatening the agricultural and national economies of the country.

The talk by CropLife Ghana was followed by an interview with the Executive Director of the Ghana EPA on the same TV channel to reiterate the support needed from all stakeholders for a sound pesticide management environment in the country under the initiative sponsored by the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC).

**Fred Boampong**



L-R The journalist, Uncle Bob and Fred Boampong



The journalist and J. Pwamang of Ghana EPA



## Regulatory Advocacy

### Marking the World Bee Day during COVID - 19

With the current focus on COVID-19, all other issues seem to be outpaced or muzzled but even in this maze, stakeholders found time to celebrate the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN world Bee day on May 20<sup>th</sup> in various ways more notably through webinars, mainstream media and social media.

This is a day that was set aside in 2017 by the UN General Assembly to call on world leaders, scientists, farmers and the general public to recognize the importance of bees and other pollinators to humans. This is because of not only the role of bees as producers of honey and beeswax, but even more as pollinators of crops in agriculture. in attaining food security

The day was set aside in realization that, in economic terms, the value of insect pollination is more than 153 billion € per year; therewith making the honeybee one of the three most important species of "livestock"

Thanks to COVID – 19 *stay-home-be-safe situation*, I was able to participate in several virtual meetings all on the theme *Bee Engaged*; a Youth for apiculture meeting focusing on how they can be effectively engaged, a meeting of African women in apiculture focused on bee preservation and funding, Africa Apiculture platform meeting looking at land use changes and impact on bee colonies and their contribution to agriculture and finally the FAO event focusing on apiculture and good practices adopted by beekeepers to support their livelihoods, deliver quality products and ecosystem services.

Speakers and participants in all these meetings echoed the famous words of Albert Einstein paraphrased as *if bees were to disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live*. All these stakeholders were keen to share efforts towards improvement of honeybee health specifically the various environmental stressors. It is understood that stressors are frequently different in their prevalence and relevance between different regions, and sometimes even regionally specific; therefore, a good knowledge of the respective health-influencing factors is the basis for successful efforts to preserve and foster the health of bees.



Factors affecting Bee Health



## Regulatory Advocacy

From the discussions, any one factor out of the eight illustrated had lots of lessons and initiatives shared.

African women beekeeper’s forum emphasized preservation of bees through enhancing among others nutrition by improving the habitat, planting bee friendly trees, providing water and checking the hives constantly. Another area of concern was the need to improve bee keeping practices among the women. Other concerns for many stakeholders in the virtual engagements were; bee diseases and pests, misuse of pesticides and climate change, deforestation among others.

Some of the recommendations made include:

- Recognition of pollination services as a key input in agriculture alongside, seeds fertilizers and pesticides with requisite policy development and investment.
- Enhancing youth and women involvement in apiculture as a source of livelihood.
- Improve forage by planting of diverse set of vegetation including native trees which flower at different times to ensure continues supply of flowers
- Protecting existing habitats from further depletion due to different land uses
- Avoiding the use of pesticides when bees are foraging

For crop farmers, that use pesticides on their farms it is very critical to implement IPM, comply with the regulations laid down in the country and coordinate with bee farmers to avoid incidents.

What the world bee day meant for me was that as an all-time activity,

*We should all be Bee - responsible and Bee engaged*

Stella Simiyu

**“Bee” Responsible**  
**TIPS FOR PROTECTING BEES**

**Always read the pesticide label**

- Follow label instructions
- Alert authorities of counterfeit pesticides

**If the label indicates the product may be toxic to bees:**

- Coordinate with nearby beekeepers over plans to spray and take appropriate protective measures
- Avoid spraying when plants are in bloom
- Consider that application in the early morning or evening when bees are less likely to be foraging can further reduce the potential exposure of pollinators
- Be mindful that bees may still be present from nearby forage even if the crop you are spraying is not attractive to bees

**Only treat the target area**

- Shut off sprayers when turning at field ends or near environmentally sensitive areas
- Shut off nozzles if there are gaps in the crops

**Minimize drift and contamination**

- Use low drift nozzles if possible and calibrate spray equipment regularly
- Avoid spraying in windy conditions
- Minimize dust from treated seed by carefully pouring it out of bags and using planting machinery that eliminates the production of dust

For more information please visit [www.croplife.org](http://www.croplife.org)

CropLife INTERNATIONAL

[www.croplife.org](http://www.croplife.org)

Helping Farmers Grow



## Anti-Counterfeiting Activities

### Joining forces for sustained AntiCFT activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CropLife Cote d'Ivoire and the association of generic SMEs in Cote d'Ivoire (AMEPHCI) organized a ceremony to present Anti-COVID-19 kits to the Directorate of Plant Protection, "Control and Quality" (DPVCQ) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) of Cote d'Ivoire. The ceremony which took place on May 15 was attended by 15 representatives of the two associations, the Director and two Deputy Directors of the DPVCQ and the media comprising the national TV and radio stations. The kits comprising of face masks, hand sanitation solutions and water storage buckets for hand washing will be used at the DPVCQ offices in Abidjan and at the regional offices of the MINADER across the country.

The President of CropLife Cote d'Ivoire, Guy Liabra, on behalf of the 2 associations, thanked the Director of DPVCQ for personally participating at the ceremony and for all the initiatives aimed at enabling pesticide availability to farmers during the crisis. This includes but is not limited to the ministerial decree to consider pesticides and other inputs as essential goods alongside pharmaceuticals, fuel, etc. The other noticeable action relates to the letter sent out by the Director of DPVCQ to alert the regional AntiCFT (CDLPI) committees across the country about the risks of infiltration and proliferation of counterfeit and other illegal pesticides on the market during the COVID-19 crisis. Arising from the ceremony and the kits presented, the two national associations expect the DPVCQ to pursue their efforts in combating counterfeit and other illegal pesticides. This activity requires the use of barriers against COVID-19 such as face masks and hand sanitizers during market monitoring and control operations.

The Director of DPVCQ thanked the two associations for the joint initiative and committed his team to stand alongside the pesticide industry led by CropLife Cote d'Ivoire and AMEPHCI for "joint efforts against counterfeiting during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond".



The DPVCQ and the WCA Hub Director of CropLife AME washing their hands as did the other participants upon arrival. Photo: Courtesy CropLife Cote d'Ivoire.



Bama Yao



The President of CropLife Cote d'Ivoire and the representative of AMEPHCI presenting samples (L) of the kits (R) to the Director of DPVCQ. Photo Courtesy CropLife CI.



The President of CropLife CI (L) and of the Director of DPVCQ (R) addressing the media at the end of the ceremony. Photo Courtesy CropLife Cote d'Ivoire.



## Association Management

### New Executive Council for CropLife South Africa

In a first for CropLife South Africa, the Annual General Meeting was flawlessly conducted on 18 May 2020 via teleconferencing. The meeting was opened by CropLife SA CEO, Rod Bell, after which Marius Boshoff, CropLife SA President, gave an overview of the progress made throughout the year based on the four strategic pillars defined by ExCo, namely stewardship; government liaison, legislation and regulatory compliance; communication, brand and image building; and education, training and skills development.

The meeting concluded by unveiling the newly elected Executive Council:

Antonie Delpont (Syngenta), Chris Thompson (Laeveld Agrochem), David Wood (Farmers Agri-Care), Gerrit Badenhorst (Rolfes Agri), Henk van der Westhuizen (Philagro), Jan Botha (Arysta LifeScience), Kobus Meintjes (Corteva), Kobus Steenekamp (Bayer Crop Science), Marius Boshoff (Villa Crop Protection), Niel Kruger (InteliGro), Paul Roux (Avima), Quintin Cross (Nulandis), Rod Bell (CropLife South Africa).

The council convened a meeting the following day and elected Quintin Cross as first time President, and re-elected Kobus Meintjes as Vice-President of CropLife South Africa. Together they will form the directorship of the association, along with the Chief Executive Officer.

CropLife South Africa took the opportunity to thank all the outgoing council members for their dedication to the industry and the association over the past year, with special mention to outgoing President, Marius Boshoff, who has served the association with commitment and enthusiasm over the past two years.

Congratulations were offered to the newly elected members and the best of luck as we they work together to take the association and the industry forward.

**Elriza Theron**



Newly elected President CropLife South Africa - Quintin Cross



## Association Management

### Zambian Government Lists Agricultural Inputs as Essential Commodities

The Corona novel virus, COVID-19, has highlighted the challenge of protecting the health of the population whilst avoiding disruptions in the movement of goods and essential services across the country. The declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic has necessitated certain restrictions in travel which also includes the movement of goods and persons both within the country and across borders.

The Zambian Government, like many other countries worldwide, deemed border control measures as necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. The Government has however stated that these measures should not undermine the continuity of economic activities and must not interrupt the availability of goods. It added that in general, such measures should not cause serious disruption of supply chains of essential services of interest to the national economy.

In an effort to develop an effective guideline, the Government consulted stakeholders which included CropLife Zambia to submit the list of goods to be considered essential to the economic activities of the nation. Supported by the information supplied by CropLife International on placing agriculture at the heart of essential economic activities in the fight against poverty, the National Association, CropLife Zambia, submitted the list of these goods which included; *Insecticides, Fungicides, Herbicides, Adjuvants, Liquid fertilisers, any other specific crop protection products and crop growth enhancers*

The result of this consultation was the development of National Transport Emergency Operational Guidelines for use during the COVID-19 Pandemic to prevent the spread of the Virus by the Ministry of Transport and Communication. One of the objectives of the guidelines was to, "Facilitate inter-state flow of essential goods under listed"

It is very important that agricultural inputs, which includes crop protection products, has been listed as essential goods which must not be hindered in movement within the country and across borders especially in that all crop protection products are imported and not manufactured locally.

The Zambian Government is in the process of sharing these guidelines with member states through official channels provided within SADC, COMESA and other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in order to facilitate interstate flow of essential goods and services along the development corridors. Bilateral and multilateral talks through RECs will also enhance coordination mechanisms.

This development was appreciated by the agricultural industry, CropLife Zambia included, as this gives an excellent opportunity to move products timeously to the farmers in order to ensure continuation of agricultural production. This is probably the best way to fight COVID-19 as any interruption to agricultural production would further escalate the problem as food supply would be reduced.

**Perry Ngoma**

#### 3.0 Essential Goods and Services

Focus during the pandemic should be placed on movement and clearance of essential goods at all borders/dry ports which shall include:

- i. Medicines, medical equipment, laboratory supplies and Protective equipment;
- ii. Food supplies, additives, ingredients and packaging material;
- iii. Agricultural inputs and commodities;
- iv. Fuel and other energy related supplies;
- v. Security, emergency and humanitarian relief services;
- vi. Chemicals and other hazardous substances;
- vii. Industrial raw materials for local production and export; and
- viii. Information Communication and Technology Equipment.

Extract from page 6 of the guidelines

Trucks marooned at Chirundu border post before the guidelines were issued



## Plant Biotechnology

### First year of *Bt* Cotton under commercial conditions in Malawi

For several years, the Government of Malawi and various stakeholders in the cotton sub sector have worked towards improving the productivity of cotton and efficiency of the sector. One benefit sprouting from this stakeholder collaboration was the development of the Malawi Cotton Development Strategy which highlights different pillars to achieve the same end result. The Malawi Cotton Development Strategy was developed in a period where there existed the Cotton Act (2013) which established the Cotton Council of Malawi and period in which there is emphasis on cotton seed supply system and use combined tools to improve the productivity.

The long journey started with the approval by the Malawi Government under the Malawi Biosafety Act 2002 (2012) in which the first confined field trials were conducted by the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, followed by multilocational trials at five sites for a 2-year period, at Luanar Bunda Campus, Chitala Research Station, Toleza Commercial Farm, Makoka Research Station and Mgbu research station.

At the point of deregulation in 2015/16, Bayer, holder of the License, provided the Department of Agricultural Research Services the opportunity to start trialed hybrid variety evaluations in different cotton agroecological areas across the country for a further 2-year period. In December 2018, the Government of Malawi approved the commercial cultivation of Bollgard 2 (*Bt* Cotton). About 1000 demonstration plots were planted by the Mahyco Cotton Company and a substantial number of cotton farmers were able to access *Bt* seed this past growing season.

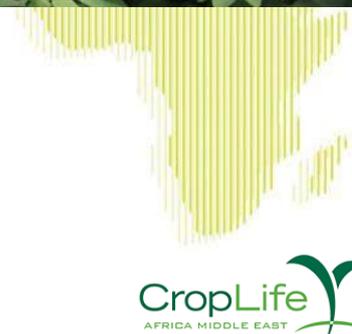
**Alick Maulawo, Bayer Malawi**



Contrast of neighbouring farms, *Bt* (Left) and non *Bt* (Right)



An entomologist explaining to farmers the benefits of the *Bt* Cotton in a *Bt* cotton field



**CropLife**  
AFRICA MIDDLE EAST

## Plant Biotechnology

### Kenyan Researchers Seek Approval to Introduce Disease-Resistant Cassava

Cassava researchers in Kenya have asked the Government to approve a disease-resistant genetically modified (GM) cassava which can protect the farmers cultivating the crop from devastating losses.

An application by Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) for environmental release and commercialization of brown streak disease (CBSD) resistant cassava line 4046 has been submitted to the National Biosafety Authority (NBA).

The NBA published a notice requesting the public to participate by sending their comments on this application. The public participation process, which will take 30 days from when the notice was published, ends on June 14, 2020. "The Authority, thereafter, will make a final decision on the application based on safety assessment, socio-economic considerations, and relevant comments received from the public," reads the notice.

The application, containing extensive information on the safety of this trait, was developed using modern biotechnology to express high levels of resistance to CBSD, a disease spread by whiteflies and by infected cuttings. The application is currently undergoing a science-based review process by the NBA, together with relevant regulatory agencies and independent experts, to ascertain that cassava line 4046 is safe to human and animal health, and to the environment.

Farmers and consumers will benefit from CBSD-resistant cassava as it promises increased cassava root quality and marketable yield. The improved cassava was developed under the VIRCA Plus project, a collaborative program between KALRO, the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) Uganda, and the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center. KALRO's Application follows several years of laboratory, greenhouse, and confined field trials.

Speaking after submission of the Environmental Release Application, KALRO Director-General Dr. Eliud Kireger said should the Application be approved, the disease-resistant Cassava Line 4046 will be available to breeders, subsequently providing crop improvement options. This will significantly contribute to food security and the creation of thousands of jobs along the value chain due to the crop's potential for multipurpose use.

Kenya's VIRCA Plus Principal Investigator Prof. Douglas Miano is delighted to be leading the team of scientists addressing the CBSD problem. "We were looking for a viable intervention and we have got it! I feel very proud of being part of this achievement," he enthused.

ISAAA AfriCenter has been handling the communication and policy engagement component of the project in the country. "AfriCenter is committed to engaging all stakeholders along the cassava value chain and build a strong knowledge base for supporting the Application based on scientific evidence generated by the project team. Our farmers will then have a choice of accessing different varieties of high-quality cassava," said Dr. Margaret Karembu, AfriCenter Director and head of VIRCA Plus Kenya communications team

ISAAA



## Plant Biotechnology



### FSANZ Rules GM Potatoes Are Safe, Calls the Public to Comment

Two genetically modified (GM) potato lines have passed the evaluation of the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). They announced that there are no potential public health and safety concerns with the said potatoes.

The two potatoes are derived from Innate potato lines V11 and Z6. The former has reduced acrylamide potential and reduced browning traits (blackspot bruising), while the latter has both traits plus disease resistance to foliar late blight. As both potatoes will be grown overseas, its applicant is seeking approval of foods derived from the GM potatoes, such as potato starch and pre-cooked potato chips.

FSANZ assessed both lines using a range of factors including allergy risks and unintended effects resulting from the potatoes' genetic modification. They ruled out that food from both GM potatoes is as safe for human consumption as conventional potato cultivars. The regulatory body is now calling the public for comments as part of its decision-making process that will determine if the GM potatoes will be welcomed to the market.

ISAAA





CropLife Africa Middle East  
International Association AISBL  
Rue Théodore de Cuyper 100  
B-1200 Brussels

[www.croplifeafrica.org](http://www.croplifeafrica.org)

