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President Museveni opens 2nd Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) Partnership Platform



October 13, 2016, Entebbe, Uganda – Ugandan President, H.E Yoweri Museveni has called for a collective effort among African countries to address the aflatoxins challenge in Africa as they are a major health risk and impede the agricultural and trade sectors of the continent.

Officially opening the 2nd Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) Partnership Platform, President Museveni outlined some diseases like cancer, pneumonia and Hepatitis B, among others as, illnesses that could be caused by consuming

foods contaminated by aflatoxins.

He called for more concerted and proactive efforts to sensitize the general populace about the effects of aflatoxins on their wellbeing.

President Museveni proceeded to engage Professor Archileo Kaaya, Head, Department of Food Technology and Nutrition at Makerere University and Uganda Mycotoxins Mitigation Steering Committee Member (UMMSC), on the best practices and practical solutions for fighting aflatoxins.

Some of the solutions the duo discussed included farmers engaging in better agricultural practices, from planting to storage; heightened awareness and sensitization campaigns about aflatoxins.

And also speaking at the opening ceremony, AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace reiterated the AUC's commitment to continue supporting its Member States through PACA and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in addressing aflatoxins.

"We encourage countries that have progressed in addressing the problem using good practices to share lessons learnt and avail their knowledge to those who continue to be



afflicted with acute outbreaks and chronic exposure of these toxins,” Commissioner Tumusiime said. “Let us ensure that the message of controlling aflatoxins reaches our farmers, our mothers and the markets in order to protect lives which are ignorantly being exposed to aflatoxins.”

Aflatoxins are natural compounds produced by the mould *Aspergillus flavus* and related species. They are highly toxic to humans and animals, causing liver disease and cancer. Chronic exposure to aflatoxins is also associated with stunting and immune system suppression. Aflatoxin-producing moulds affect grain and other food crops – notably, maize and groundnuts. The toxins can be carried over along the food chain and contaminate animal source foods. Humans and animals get exposed to aflatoxins through ingestion of foods/feeds contaminated by the toxins.

Effective aflatoxin management is critical for achievement of the Malabo Declaration Commitments on eradicating hunger, tripling intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities and services as well as reducing poverty, and contributing to the realization of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The 2nd PACA PP’s official opening ceremony was also graced by Hon. Ssempijja Vincent Bamulangaki Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda and Hon. Jessica Eriyo, Deputy Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC) among other dignitaries.

President Museveni, after opening the Partnership Platform took time to walk through exhibition stands displaying various stakeholders’ efforts in fighting the scourge.

The 2nd PP is expected to explore the progress of implementing action areas at the continental, regional and national levels, thereby assessing the achievements, success factors, bottle-necks and challenges of implementation. Furthermore, the PP will explore means of sustaining implementation of activities beyond the piloting phase of PACA support in the six PACA Pilot Countries (Gambia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda).

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