

Bio-safety Regulations in Africa

Location: Wageningen

Date: March 18, 2010

Duration: 03:00 PM to 05:00 PM

On the occasion of the PhD defense of Enoch Mutebi Kikulwe a mini-symposium on '**Bio-safety Regulations in Africa**' is organized by the Environmental Economics and Natural Resources Group of Wageningen University in the afternoon of March 18. Speakers are Prof. Robert Paarlberg (Harvard University), Dr. Jose Falck-Zepeda (IFPRI) and Prof. Eric Tollens (Catholic University Leuven). Everyone who is interested can join the symposium and/or the PhD defense ceremony on March 19 at 11:00.

Programme

March 18: 15.00 - 17.00 hrs (de Leeuwenborch, Hollandseweg 1, Hofstee Zaal, C64)

Starved for Science: How Biotechnology Is Being Kept Out of Africa
(*Prof. R. Paarlberg, Harvard University*)

Bio-safety Regulations in Africa: Current Status and Future Developments
(*Dr. J. Falck-Zepeda, IFPRI*)

Opening the Discussion: A Comment on Robert Paarlberg and Jose Falck-Zepeda
(*Prof. E. Tollens, Catholic University Leuven*)

March 19: 11.00 - 13.30 hrs (Aula Wageningen University, Generaal Foulkesweg 1a, Wageningen)

PhD defense of Enoch Mutebi Kikulwe

“On the introduction of genetically modified bananas in Uganda: Social benefits, costs, and consumer preferences”

The Speakers

Robert Paarlberg is the Betty Freyhof Johnson Class of 1944 Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College and Associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He received his B.A. in government from Carleton College in Minnesota and his Ph.D. in government from Harvard. He has served as visiting professor of government at Harvard, as a legislative aide in the U.S. Senate, and as an officer in the U.S. Naval Intelligence Command.



Paarlberg's most recent research focus has been on the regulation of modern technology, including biotechnology. In 2004-05 he published articles on the competitive posture of scientific research in the United States and on the global stem cell research competition. He has worked most intensively on policies toward genetically modified crops and foods in developing countries. In recent years he has done research on this topic in Kenya, Zambia, Brazil, Cameroon, Senegal, India, China and Argentina.

Paarlberg has also recently completed major studies of regional policy harmonization toward biotechnology in eastern and southern Africa, for the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) on the politics of accepting biofortified food crops in developing countries, commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Paarlberg is currently a member of the Board of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the National Research Council of the National Academies and of the International Scientific Committee at the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR). He has been a member of the Board of Directors of Winrock International, a member of the Emerging Markets Advisory Committee at the United States Department of Agriculture, a scientific liaison officer to IFPRI from the U.S. Agency for International Development, and a consultant to the National Intelligence Council (NIC), USAID, IFPRI and the World Bank.

Speech:

In *Starved for Science* Robert Paarlberg explains why poor African farmers are denied access to productive technologies, particularly genetically engineered seeds with improved resistance to insects and drought. He traces this obstacle to the current opposition to farm science in prosperous countries. Having embraced agricultural science to become well-fed themselves, those in wealthy countries and in particular Europe are now instructing Africans—on the most dubious grounds—not to do the same.

Jose Falck-Zepeda is research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). José joined IFPRI in 2004. Prior to joining IFPRI, José Falck-Zepeda worked as a Research Fellow at the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) in the Hague, the Netherlands. He also was a Post Doctoral Research Fellow at Auburn University, Alabama, and Assistant Professor/Instructor at the Panamerican Agricultural School (Zamorano) in Honduras. A citizen of Honduras, he holds an Agrónomo Degree from Panamerican Agricultural School (Zamorano), B.S. degree (Animal Science) from Texas A&M University, and M.S. and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Auburn University.



His work at IFPRI focuses on the economics and impact assessment of biotechnology and biosafety. In addition, Falck-Zepeda focuses on agricultural R&D policy and technological innovation in developing countries. He is member of the International Scientific Committee at the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR).

Falck-Zepeda participates in the IFPRI Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS) which supports developing countries in the development of an effective biosafety system to protect consumers and the environment as well as to ensure safe access to new products and technologies developed in-country or elsewhere. Most recently Falck-Zepeda did work on the issue of socio-economic assessments as part a part of bio-safety regulations.

In recent years he has done research on this topic in Latin America, South and Southeast Asia but mainly Africa.

Speech:

In Bio-safety Regulations in Africa: Current Status and Future Developments Jose will report about the status of bio-safety regulations in Africa and the challenges governments face in implementing them and provide an outlook into the near future. The inclusion of socio economic considerations assessments, especially in those systems where there is very little clarity in terms of methods and decision making rules, can introduce the potential of increasing regulatory lags due to delays, and certainly will increase the cost of conducting such assessments. In both cases, there are social costs attached that may even impact negatively the deployment of technologies that address crops and traits of interest to developing countries. Irrespective how countries deal with having more guidance in terms of methods, they need to have clarity in terms of decision making rules that will guide inclusion of socio-economic considerations.

Eric Tollens is Professor Emeritus at the Division for Agricultural and Food Economics in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences of the Catholic University Leuven in Belgium. He obtained his M.A. in Economics in 1971 and his PhD in Agricultural Economics in 1975 from Michigan State University.



Tollens most recent research concentrates on policy and technology impacts. Under his guidance a number of research projects on the economics of agriculture biotechnology in Africa and Europe have been implemented. He is the “founding father” of the EUWAB-project (European Union Welfare effects of Agricultural Biotechnology), assessing the economic impact of agricultural biotechnology innovations in the EU and their welfare distribution among EU Member States, producers, processors, consumers, input suppliers, governments and the environment. The project has been addressing the issue of green biotechnology in Europe and abroad.

Tollens is a member of the science council of AGRHYMET and the Institut du Sahel in Bamako which deal with bio-safety issues in Africa. Tollens is also Chairman of the Board of ICRAF (World Agroforestry Center) based in Nairobi, a member of the Board of CTA in Wageningen and a member of the International Scientific Committee at the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR). Previously he has been a member of a number of CGIAR and World Bank projects. From 1971-1977 he was Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Université Lovanium and Université Nationale du Zaïre, Yangambi.

Speech:

In *Opening the Discussion: A Comment on Robert Paarlberg and Jose Falck-Zepeda* Tollens will address the issues raised by the two speakers and comment on the recent debate about bio-safety regulations from his almost 40 years of experience in Africa.