

A continental gathering for food safety, to combat aflatoxin in Africa's food

Multi-sectoral partners join hands in the common fight

Arusha, Tanzania, 4th November 2019 – Tanzania plays host to a critical continental convention on food safety that opened today in Arusha, Tanzania – the 1st *Aflasafe for Africa Conference, fighting aflatoxin in food* with the theme *Business meets research, for safer food in Africa*.

Officially opening the conference, Hon Japhet N Hasunga, Tanzania's Minister for Agriculture, said, "Considering its complexity, tackling aflatoxin requires a holistic approach targeting on-farm production, harvest, storage, processing, and logistics, involving both the public and private sectors to reduce food losses and increase the availability of safe and nutritious food."

Aflatoxin is a highly toxic, cancer-causing poison that contaminates food. It builds up in our bodies and damages our health. As well as causing liver cancer, it weakens us against other diseases and is associated with stunting in children.

In large amounts, aflatoxin can kill straight away or make us ill, but most of the time we eat it without noticing. It gradually infiltrates our

bodies, can be present undercover for many years doing long-term harm, and is very difficult to detect.

The two-day conference runs from 4th to 5th November 2019 and is convened by the Aflasafe® Technology Transfer and Commercialisation initiative (ATTC) of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Aflasafe is a safe natural solution to the problem of aflatoxin, homegrown in Africa with help from partners in the USA and Europe. Aflasafe works from the plot to your plate to stop contamination from reaching dangerous levels and keep foods like maize and groundnuts safe to eat.

"Aflasafe is a tried and tested product that has behind it more than a decade-and-a-half of collaborative and participatory research with partners within and from outside Africa, and involving farmers," revealed Dr Victor Manyong, IITA Director for Eastern Africa.

"The conference has attracted more than 100 participants drawn from 15 countries, the bulk being from Africa. With Aflasafe now commercially available in seven African countries, and more on the way, this is an opportune time to bring together the companies involved in the manufacture and distribution of Aflasafe, as well as other stakeholders in the larger fight against aflatoxin in Africa's food. This is the first such continental conference on Aflasafe," said Mr Abdou Konlambigue, ATTC Managing Director.



This is Aflasafe dyed blue with food colour to avoid confusion with sorghum to eat. The green band along the bottom of the pack certifies that non-hazardous Aflasafe has the highest World Health Organisation standard for safety.

Participants include company chief executives and production leads; maize, groundnut and sorghum processors and bulk traders; funders and government representatives; regulators and leading food-safety industry players; manufacturing and testing equipment suppliers, and regional economic communities.

Among the topics for discussion are go-to-market business models, technology improvement, business partnerships, and enabling policies and regulation to accelerate the uptake of Aflasafe.

Aflasafe is customised for each country, and is currently on sale in Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania. Product development is ongoing in another 12 African countries. These are Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as explained by Dr Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, IITA Principal Plant Pathologist and Leader, Africa-wide Aflasafe Initiative.

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LINKS

- More on the [1st Aflasafe for Africa Conference, fighting aflatoxin in food](#)
- [Aflasafe](#) | [aflatoxin](#) | [Aflasafe in my country of interest](#)

About IITA: The [International Institute of Tropical Agriculture](#) (IITA) is a not-for-profit institution that generates agricultural innovations to meet Africa's most pressing challenges of hunger, malnutrition, poverty and natural resource degradation. Working with various partners across sub-Saharan Africa, we improve livelihoods, enhance food and nutrition security, increase employment, and preserve natural resource integrity. IITA is a member of CGIAR, a global agriculture research partnership for a food-secure future.

About ATTC: The [Aflasafe Technology Transfer and Commercialisation initiative](#) (ATTC) implemented by [IITA](#) identifies strategic options for partnership with private companies or government entities, executes those partnerships, and helps ensure the distinct Aflasafe products reach millions of farmers. The initiative will contribute to improved food safety and increased income for smallholder African farmers through using Aflasafe. ATTC's target is to cover half-a-million smallholder hectares with Aflasafe in 11 countries where Aflasafe is – or is likely to soon be – a nationally registered product. These are Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. ATTC's activities are geared to increase Aflasafe's availability and accessibility, and to improve access to lucrative aflatoxin-conscious markets for maize and groundnuts. [Download ATTC brochure](#)

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