

The Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Partnership



MEDIA RELEASE

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Africa and Australia working together on biosecurity

Fifteen Senior Biosecurity Fellows from Africa have begun an intensive six weeks studying Australia's globally recognised plant biosecurity system, beginning today with a week-long workshop at AgriBio in Melbourne.

The Fellows are the first members of the Africa Plant Biosecurity Network, which aims to improve plant biosecurity and safe trade of agricultural products in ten east and southern African countries; Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"Crop pests and diseases are major limitations to eastern African farmer incomes and food security," said Dr Michael Robinson, CEO of Australia's Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (PBCRC) which is leading the project.

"While improving plant biosecurity, including surveillance, planning and border quarantine, can make a real difference, African countries are often hampered by a lack of resources, including skills, capabilities and training.

"By using its world-class strength, experience and comparative advantage in biosecurity, Australia can help biosecurity managers develop their plant biosecurity teams and improve biosecurity outcomes for Africa.

The six weeks in Australia will include individual three week placements with a range of State and Federal Governments, and biosecurity research organisations in New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT. The Fellows will spend some of this time working with their host agencies on priority African plant pest and disease issues.

"The Network is an ongoing entity, bringing together African biosecurity professionals to share information, provide mentoring, and support Fellows to manage training and outreach in their own countries," said Dr Robinson.

"This will have benefits for Australia too - biosecurity is a global challenge and all nations benefit from a stronger global biosecurity system."

The Australia-Africa Plant Biosecurity Partnership is funded by the Australian International Food Security Research Centre (AIFSRC), within the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). The program is being delivered by a consortium of PBCRC, ACIAR, CABI, CSIRO and the Crawford Fund.

For more information visit www.pbcrc.com.au/research/east-africa/

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