

REMARKS:

OPENING OF THE MYCOTOXIN LABORATORY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY SCIENCES (CAVS)

SEPTEMBER 4, 2014.

- The Ambassador of Finland to the Republic of Kenya, Her Excellency Ambassador Sofie From-Emmesberger
- Principal Secretaries for the Ministries of Livestock, Health and Agriculture
- Director, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
- Principal, CAVS, Prof Agnes Mwang'ombe
- Deans and Directors
- Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi Prof. George Magoha, and on behalf of the University of Nairobi fraternity, I wish to welcome you all to this campus to witness the official opening of the Mycotoxin Laboratory today.

The Mycotoxin Laboratory has been equipped through the Safe Food Safe Dairy Project whose objective was to build capacity in

research and analysis of mycotoxin in Kenya. The Safe Food Safe Dairy is a collaborative project between the University of Nairobi, Finnish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA), Agrifood Research (MTT), Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Egerton University, Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Health and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland.

Ladies and gentlemen, this project has established that Kenya's milk production is reduced by 33%, which is an estimated 25-30 billion shillings loss in possible income from dairy milk per year because of aflatoxins in feeds.

Through this project, it is now possible to map the aflatoxin problem in Kenya and is building capacity among farmers, policymakers and researchers on how to mitigate aflatoxin contamination which should enable our farmers to gain their full productivity, so impeded.

The first phase of the project is complete, and successful dissemination workshops were held to create awareness among policymakers, local leaders and farmers.

The second phase, also funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland has now started with the objective of building capacity in farmer-households on good agricultural practices and to equip the

Mycotoxin Laboratory which would carry out analyses that can guide farm produce management.

I am aware that during phase one of the project, a total 9 MSc, 2 Phd students and 30 Laboratory Technicians have been trained with specific focus on aflatoxin analysis and risk assessment in the dairy value chain.

It is our vision to be a world class university committed to scholarly excellence that bears positive impact on the society by addressing societal challenges.

As such one of the strategic objectives for the University of Nairobi is to initiate and strengthen collaborative initiatives with like-minded national, regional and international institutions and development agencies. The university is committed to seek and promote such partnerships and linkages that will ultimately support our core functions of teaching/learning, research and service to the community.

The Safe Food Safe Dairy Project has successfully embraced this vision and commitment in terms of building capacity to address aflatoxin contamination in Kenya. Establishing the Mycotoxin Laboratory will go a long way to enhance mitigation against aflatoxin contamination.

I therefore wish to thank the Government of Finland for funding this project. I also wish to thank our collaborators and our researchers for all the work they have put into this project.

It will therefore be necessary for all of us, and it is my sincere hope that – as collaborators, government ministries, researchers, research institutions, and funding bodies, we shall continue to work together and put into practice the wealth of information that continues to come out of this project.

Once again, I wish to extend my deep gratitude to the government of Finland for the support granted to this project.

Thank you.