

## Scientists Develop GM Tomatoes To Address Post-Harvest Losses — NABDA DG

- **Agency to produce 5 million yam seedlings next year.**

The Acting Director-General of National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), Professor Alex Akpa has said that research was ongoing by scientists to develop a Genetically Modified Tomato (GM Tomato) to address post-harvest losses.

This move became necessary following the continued losses farmers encounter while transporting their produce from the farm to market due to lack of storage facilities.

Professor Akpa also said the Agency has the mandate to produce 1 million yam seedlings before the end of December, and consequently produce another 5 million seedlings for the next farming season next year.

A lot of tomatoes produce in this country all the way from Kano axis to Kaduna, Zamfara, but before we transport these tomatoes to Lagos, or Ibadan or Port Harcourt, you lose between 35 to 40 per cent of the tomato because of lack of storage facilities.

Speaking recently in Abuja, Professor Akpa said the research to produce GM Tomato was being carried out in collaboration with the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

“Our scientists are working to develop BT tomato to combat these post-harvest losses so that farmers can transport the tomato over long distances without losing their produce. This research is being carried out in collaboration with the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan.





While noting the target of the Agency to produce 1 million yam seedlings for farmers before the end of December, the NABDA DG said Nigeria cannot achieve food security without deploying biotechnology.

“We are also in a project to do 1 million yam seedlings between now and December, and by next farming season, we are targeting about 5 million yam seedlings.

“There is no other technology we are planning to achieve this except biotechnology, and there is no way this country can achieve food security without the use of this technology”, Professor Akpa added.

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