



*The crop protection industry in Kenya follows strict regulations and invests heavily in developing safe, innovative products to protect crops. Photo Credit: aak-GROW/CropLife*

# Championing for sustainable pest control in Africa

By Eric Kimunguyi

**P**ESTICIDES, better known as pest control products (PCPs), play a crucial role in agriculture by protecting crops from pests and diseases. The use of pesticides has progressively increased in Africa because agriculture contributes significantly to economic growth and food security. PCPs have not only enhanced food security but also improved farmers' incomes through increased crop productivity and protected yields.

In Kenya, the agricultural industry is the backbone of the economy, contributing approximately 33 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The agriculture sector is a source of employment for more than 40 percent of the total population and 70 percent of the rural population. Pest control products have a significant impact on this economic sector, ensuring higher yields, reduced post-harvest losses, increased quality of crop production thus improving market competitiveness and supporting export opportunities.

The use of PCPs in all contexts is highly regulated. The regulatory framework for pesticides encompasses national, regional, and international legislation and conventions that help assure safety for users, consumers and the environment. In Kenya, the Pest Control Products Board (PCPB) is the statutory organisation that regulates the importation and

exportation, manufacture, distribution and use of pest control products.

The crop protection industry in Kenya, represented by aak-GROW/CropLife Kenya, is committed to ensuring the health and safety of individuals and communities and has been at the forefront championing stewardship and regulatory frameworks that support the use of PCPs. As a result, the industry follows strict regulations and invests heavily in developing safe, innovative products to protect crops.

To further strengthen the industry efforts, aak-GROW/CropLife Kenya in conjunction with CropLife Africa Middle East and CropLife International have launched the Sustainable Pesticide

Management Framework (SPMF) initiative. This programme aims at achieving a step-change in responsible pesticide management.

The SPMF combines best practices in regulatory and stewardship to create an enabling environment for innovation and an infrastructure that supports responsible use of pesticides. This includes collaboration with governments on regulatory risk-based frameworks, improvement of poison information reporting centres, container management programmes, and anti-counterfeit activities.

This forward-looking, systematic approach will provide farmers information and training on responsible crop protection practices and access to innovative technologies that protect human health and the environment and optimise crop production.

SPMF activities are focused on three key pillars to achieve sustainable pesticide management:

- The SPMF aims to reduce the reliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) and demonstrate change through accelerated access to innovation and by building an enabling environment that ensures, where HHPs cannot be replaced or more time is required for a

sustainable transition, products are used safely through certified retailers, spray service providers or other risk mitigation measures. Monitoring the effectiveness of applied risk management measures is a critical part of these activities.

- To ensure innovation is available to farmers, the SPMF will extend access to new and existing solutions, including biologicals, through an enhanced regulatory framework that facilitates strategic decisions and by building the capacity of local regulators in science-based risk assessment. The project also champions adoption of the Integrated Pesticide Management (IPM) such as crop rotation to minimise the impacts of pests while at the same time reducing chemical use.
- The programme will equip farmers with information and best practices that ensure responsible and effective use of pesticides, while also taking measures for responsible distribution. In addition, the SPMF will focus on incident reporting, including supporting more and better poison centres across target regions.
- The SPMF initiative, funded by CropLife International, is a proactive,

long-term engagement that supports low- and middle-income countries to develop and advance local capacity in line with the FAO-WHO Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. In Africa, it has been rolled out in Kenya and Morocco and will soon be launched in a third country in the region.

By striking a balance between the benefits of pesticide usage and the need for environmental and human health protection, Africa can achieve sustainable agriculture that ensures food security, protects ecosystems, and improves the well-being of its people. To address these challenges, African countries must prioritise the enforcement of existing regulations, enhance monitoring systems, and invest in education and training programmes for farmers. Governments, NGOs, research institutions and other stakeholders in the industry should collaborate to support farmers in adopting these practices, develop locally adapted solutions, and create platforms for knowledge exchange.

**aak-GROW is the umbrella body in Kenya for manufacturers, formulators, re-packers, importers, consultants, distributors, farmers, and users of pest control products.**

**Eric Kimunguyi is the CEO of aak-GROW/CropLife Kenya**



*aak-GROW/CropLife staff takes a group of farmers through the best practices in the usage of pest control products. Photo Credit: aak-GROW/CropLife*