

Govt unveils crop disease quarantine

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Zimbabwe - Government, in partnership with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) unveiled the maize lethal leaf necrosis (MLN) disease quarantine facility in Mazowe. MLN is a destructive disease capable of causing overwhelming damage to maize crops and has already caused significant damage in Central Africa and Western Africa. It is transmitted by insect vectors from infected maize crops.



Image Source: [AgricNation](#)

Speaking at the ceremony, Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development Minister Dr Joseph Made said MLN caused huge losses, and required proper and early management. "Maize lethal necrosis is a devastating disease capable of causing huge economic losses wherever it occurs," he said. "Smallholder farmers who frequently do not have the means to control it are particularly vulnerable if the disease infests their fields.

"Therefore, there is an urgency in the strategies we need to employ in order to prevent the deadly disease from moving further south."

Made said the disease was dangerous and could adversely affect the agricultural sector, hence it needed concerted effort to combat it. "The MLN disease is a reality that requires our combined efforts to combat its spread," he said. "This calls for intensive inter-institutional efforts to develop and deploy improved maize varieties that incorporate MLN resistance.

"The commercial seed sector is expected to play a key role by introducing and delivering MLN free healthy seed to farmers."

Made urged farmers to avoid the use of contaminated commercial seeds from MLN-endemic to non-endemic areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) director Dr Boddupalli Prassanna said MNL was a new threat to food security in Africa.

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