PRESENTATION TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE FORESTRY AND FISHERIES BY Ms MMADITHABA (TEPSY) NTSEOANE (EMERGENT FARMER), 26 FEBRUARY 2014, CAPE TOWN

THE SUCCESS OF EMERGENT FARMERS WITH GMO CROPS

Chairperon, Honourable M Johnson, honourable members of the committee, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you on the benefits GM maize.

In the first place my presentation is to give an overview of my own experience as an emergent farmer and the success I have achieved with GM maize. As a follow up I will give the results of some fellow emergent farmers in KwaZuluNatal and the Eastern Cape (Transkei).

I grew up as a city girl in Kwa-Thema near Springs. I spent every holiday on a farm with my uncle. Chasing chickens and watering plants were my favourite 'games'. Farming runs in my veins. I practise it with passion and with the benefits from GM maize I aspire to one day being one of the most successful commercial woman farmers in South Africa. I am a mother of two. Both are independent and pursuing studies in food science and marketing respectively.

In 2007 I obtained 539 ha of land from the South African government through the Land Reform Strategy. About 280 ha is arable and the rest I use as grazing for my 129 head of beef cattle. The farm is situated in Kaalfontein at Emfuleni Municipality in Sedibeng District. Vegetables and a piggery are secondary.

During my first year I planted 100 ha of conventional maize. Due to stalk borer infestation my yield was very disappointing, 2-3t/ha. In 2008 a tried a second time but results continued to be disappointing. This installed a negative attitude in me for crop planting and I then resorted to cattle farming.

In 2011 AfricaBio introduced me to GM maize resistant to stalk borer. I planted two hectares. This was a great relief. I experienced no stalk borer damage. My yield was 7t/ha with less stress, 14 tons in total on dry land, with much higher quality maize. To obtain 14 tons with conventional maze I would have needed seven hectares.

At the current price of R3 000/t it means that my two hectares gave me an income of R42 000. As I feed my cattle and family on maize as well, it means that to buy maize I would have to pay R3 000/t for my needs but being able to grow it, it saves me money and provides me with food security and any surplus that I sell gives me extra disposable income to expand my farming operation.

For this second season I have planted 10 ha GM maize. My crop is looking good and I am expecting a yield of 70 tons. I eventually plan to plant 100 ha of GM maize in future. GM maize, from my own experience, is certainly the answer to food security, hunger and poverty alleviation for smallholder farmers. Not only in South Africa, but throughout Africa. In South Africa GM maize has already shown that it can contribute to food security. In 1998 when GM maize was introduced in South Africa the average non-GM dry land yield was 2.73t/ha. In 2008, GM yield had increased to 5.09t/ha – a productivity increase of 81% - a positive impact on food security.

As far as smallholder farmers in South Africa are concerned I am not alone in speaking of success. According to published reports, Mr Richard Sithole, chairman of the Hlabisa District Farmers Union, KZN, who, with 250 members of his farmers union, planted GM white maize for the first time in 2002. Their average yield increase over conventional maize was 40.6%. In his first season Sithole's yield on two hectares dry land was 100 bags compared to 80 with conventional maize, an increase of 20%. Mr Paulos Mwelase, one of his members and chairman of the Thubalethu Farmers' Union, KZN, increased his yield from 6 bags non-GM to 45 bags GM on two hectares, an increase of 86%.

In the Eastern Cape (Transkei) according to Chief Advocate Mdutshane of Ixopozo, Flagstaff (report Daily Dispatch, East London), 120 smallholder farmers in the district planted 142 ha of GM maize dry land in 2004. Their yield with non-GM previously was on average 1.5t/ha. With the GM maize eliminating stalk borer, yields increased by 3.5 to 4t/ha, an average increase of 60%. The farmers called the new maize *Iyasihlutisa* "It fills our stomachs".

Mr Molatsi Musi from Olifantsvlei, Johannesburg, says that since he planted GM maize from 2004 his yield has increased by 34% compared

to non-GM. In 2008 he was invited by the Brazilian Council for Biotechnology Information to address farmers on the benefits of GM maize.

Worldwide in 2012 a record 17.3 million farmers grew biotech crops in 28 countries on all six continents, where more than half the world's population lives, on 170 million ha. Of these 90%, or 15 million, were small resource poor farmers in developing countries. Collectively, 85% were from China (7.2 million), India (7.2 million) and the Philippines (375 000).

This proves undoubtedly the benefits smallholder farmers are reaping from GM crops worldwide. (Attach CV)