

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

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PRESS RELEASE

Meeting to engage the private sector and other stakeholders in the registration and promotion of diatomaceous earths (DEs) as grain protectants in Tanzania

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has great pleasure in inviting the private sector and other interested parties to a half day meeting to be held during February 2005, in Dar Es Salaam at which the research team, comprising ministry and international research personnel, will present findings of the current research project on "Small-Scale Farmer Utilisation of Diatomaceous Earths during Grain Storage". Interested individuals/ companies are invited to send an email to <pps@kilimo.go.tz> detailing their scope of business/ profile. All emails must have in the subject title "DE promotional meeting" and must be received before the 20th January 2005. Based on these profiles, individuals/ companies will receive a formal invitation with details of the venue and programme, and a brief promotional sheet about the project.

Diatomaceous earths (DEs) are soft whitish powders formed from the fossils of tiny planktons which lived in oceans, rivers and lakes. After processing, these powders can be mixed with grain to kill insect pests. These inert dusts have been trialled extensively in Zimbabwe,

and for the last three years in Tanzania, where the devastating larger grain borer (LGB, *Prostephanus truncatus, dumuzi*) is widespread.

The aim of the meeting is to provide the private sector with the most recent findings on the efficacy of DEs as grain protectants, and to share with them the nature and extent of interest being shown in the product by farmers and other stakeholders. Much interest is being shown not only because of their impressive efficacy in protecting stored grain from insect damage for more than 10 months, but also because of their low mammalian toxicity. DEs are non-organophosphate-based and have a physical as opposed to chemical mode of action.

The next step in the process of making these safe grain protectants available to Tanzanian farmers is the official registration of the product with the Tropical Pesticide Research Institute (TPRI). This process requires the identification of a suitable private sector registrant to step forward and 'champion' the launch of diatomaceous earths in Tanzania and probably in other regional countries as well.

The meeting will elaborate further, and avail detailed evidence to all interested parties. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, which has implemented these trials through its Plant Health Services and TPRI in collaboration with the UK's Natural Resource Institute and University of Zimbabwe, is satisfied that the research to date is compelling and that the findings have huge potential impact on farmer' livelihoods. The Ministry therefore looks forward to an application from a suitable commercial enterprise to register D.E for grain protection.