

MP warns of toxic maize in the market

Kebs accused of failing to check quality of grains that are imported into the country

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Kenyans could be faced with serious health complications due to claims that some maize millers and feed manufacturers use contaminated grains.

The chairman of the parliamentary committee on agriculture, Mr John Mututho, said there was ample evidence indicating aflatoxin-contaminated maize was being imported into the country, but that there was official laxity to investigate the matter.

"Officers from Kebs (Kenya Bureau of Standards) should not only be sent home, but to prison as well," he noted.

Moisture content

Mr Mututho accused Kebs of failing to check the quality of maize imported into the country.

Aflatoxin, which develops in maize that is stored beyond the required moisture content, is a fungus that has been blamed for development of cancerous cells in humans.

The MP claimed he had



2010

Year Naivasha lawmaker raised the alarm over presence of contaminated maize in the country

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Naivasha MP John Mututho

reported the matter to senior detectives in Coast, the entry point of the alleged noxious maize but was being taken round in circles.

It is not the first time the Naivasha MP is raising the red flag over the importation of contaminated maize. In 2010 he raised the flag

on a consignment of maize from South Africa, which had moisture content beyond 14.2 per cent and was prone to developing aflatoxin.

He alleged that the consignment was released from the Mombasa Port and found its way into government granaries.

He said the toxic maize was traced to the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) silos in Nakuru, and released for public consumption despite the MP's protests.

Efforts to get a comment from the Agriculture ministry were futile.

Mr Mututho also said he would soon expose a milk company that was allegedly selling poisonous milk, suspected to have been infected with aflatoxin from contaminated animal feed.

Food security

The MP was speaking at a forum in Nairobi to find ways of boosting food security.

The chairman of Cereal Millers Association, Mr Diamond Lalji, said his milling plant had rejected a consignment of maize from a neighbouring country after it was found to be contaminated.

"Two months ago we rejected maize from a neighbouring country after we found it to contain aflatoxin," he said.