



Bird Shield to Ease Grain Farmers

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Grain farmers in Rwanda and East Africa have cause to smile with an agricultural spray that repels predator birds.

Bird shield, manufactured by Impec of the United States is a bird repellent made from the chemical, methyl anthranilate.

When sprayed on rice, barley, wheat, sorghum and other grain fields, it releases an eagle smell in the air. "When the birds come they imagine there is an eagle predator in the air and the other birds are scared off," the agronomist and marketer with Balton in Uganda Mr. Rogers Walamaku told Business Week during a telephone interview on July 3.

The country manager of Balton based in Rwanda, Mr. Bob Gatera said the spray will enable parents let their kids go to school rather than remain home chasing away birds in the field. "It is also good for human resource development. The children in the rural communities will be able to go to school instead of staying home to hit birds."

So how exactly does the bird shield work? Walamaku told Business Week that the liquid is first dissolved in water and sprayed on the rice fields during the flowering stage. "This is the milky stage and the birds love it so much. Bird shield is environmentally friendly and does not kill the birds, there is no contamination with the environment and it breaks down within 7 to 10 days. There is no problem of contamination at the harvesting stage."

Bird shield also enables farmers save costs on labour needed to oversee the fields and chase away the birds, especially in large commercial farms with extensive land areas.

A farmer is also able to increase his yields with no bird attacks to the small grains and in the process increase on the production and income.

According to Walamaku, bird shield has been in existence for about a decade now and it has been extensively and successfully used in South Africa, and is now being introduced in parts of Uganda where small grain cultivation is taking root.

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