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Republic Of Botswana

Ministry of Agricultural Development
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2 December, 2016

ALL MEDIA HOUSES

PRESS RELEASE

OUTBREAK OF A QUARANTINE PEST OF TOMATO

The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security wishes to inform farmers and the general public that Tomato leaf miner (*Tuta absoluta*,) a pest of quarantine importance has been detected in Botswana. The affected areas are Bobirwa, Boteti, Chobe, North East, and North West. It's preferred host is tomatoes but it can attack other solanaceous crops such as potato, pepper, eggplant, etc. Tomato leaf miner can cause up to 100% yield loss. The main pathway for the Tomato leaf miner to spread from one area to another or from one country to another is through the movement of infested seedlings and tomato fruits.

Given the economic importance of Tomato leaf miner, a management strategy has been developed to be used by all tomato producers in Botswana. All producers are expected to cooperate with the monitoring teams in their districts. Failure to cooperate with the agricultural extension agents will result in farms being placed under quarantine.

In an effort to prevent the spread of the pest across the country, the Ministry recommends the following measures:



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- Field sanitation through collection and destruction of infested fruits;
- Planting of non-host crops;
- Crop rotation;
- Cultivating the field to expose the pupa; and
- Mass trapping of the adult moths in and outside the farms using water baited lures.

In addition, the Ministry will enforce the following:

- Destruction of all tomato plants in the infested farms
- All infested farms should not plant host crops for one (1) year.
- Traders importing fruits into the country to follow proper Phytosanitary procedures.

Therefore, movement of solanaceous crops from the Tomato leaf miner infested areas in the country is restricted. Importation of tomato fruits from countries infested with Tomato leaf miner is suspended with immediate effect until further notice.

For this operation to be a success, the public's full cooperation will be highly appreciated.

For further information and clarification contact Division of Agricultural Information and Public Relation
3689115/9113/72339719.

Boikhutso Rabasha
FOR/PERMANENT SECRETARY



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