

# ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION



The year 2020 is officially being marked worldwide as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) following a declaration by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018 through resolution **A/RES/73/252**.

IYPH 2020 provides a platform for national, regional and global plant health organizations to raise awareness of the importance and positive impacts of plant health in addressing issues of global importance, including hunger, poverty, threats to the environment and economic development.

As part of national activities to mark the International Year of Plant Health, KEPHIS has organized an essay writing competition targeted at university and college students to enhance understanding on the importance of plant health.

## Thematic Areas:

University and college students will write essays along the following thematic areas:

1. Pests and diseases such as the Fall Army Worm, *Tuta absoluta* (leaf miner) and the Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease (MLND) have caused major crop losses in maize and tomatoes in Kenya. What solutions do young people have that could mitigate these losses? In your opinion, is enough being done to combat plant pests and diseases in Kenya?
2. It is now a fact that climate change is affecting food production and is here to stay. Erratic weather patterns have made food production a challenge, especially amongst farmers who still follow the traditional weather patterns. Researchers have also developed crop varieties that are drought tolerant and disease resistant in efforts to mitigate climate change. What strategy/strategies would you put in place to educate farmers on unpredictable weather patterns and get their buy in on the need to change their farming methods in tandem with the times? Give practical and applicable examples
3. Kenya's horticultural produce is world acclaimed. These includes flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs. The produce is preferred because of taste, texture, among other factors. However, Kenya faces competition from other countries for market share and challenges of non-compliance due to presence of quarantine pests. In your view, what is the linkage between phytosanitary and market access for international produce? What is the role of the youth in safeguarding our overseas markets to earn more revenue leading to economic growth and development? Provide practical and applicable examples.
4. The Government of Kenya is currently focusing on maize, potatoes and rice to promote food security in Kenya. Do you think that these three foods can achieve the government's goals? Why or why not? What foods do you think could contribute to food security? Give practical ways that Kenyans can uptake other foods and stop overreliance of maize which has faced a myriad of challenges
5. The yield potential of a crop is engrained in the variety's genetic make up. Certified seed of an improved variety is vigorous, true to type, physically clean, free from disease, pests and weeds. The certified seed

of an improved variety definitely is a good starting point in alleviating poverty and enhancing good production environment. However adoption and use of certified seed of improved varieties is still very low among Kenyan farmers. What strategies should be put in place to increase adoption and use of certified seeds? Elaborate on one of the appropriate strategies which is cost effective that can be implemented to address the issue. What is the role of the youth in this strategy?

6. In the Crops Act (2013), agriculture is a devolved function giving county governments control of agriculture in their respective counties. Pests and diseases can spread from one region to another through planting material leading to increased cost of management and loss of livelihood. What measures should county governments take to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and diseases to protect their agricultural resources?

## Duration of the Essay Writing Competition

Two (2) months from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Requirements of Entry into the Essay Writing Competition

- The Completion is open to Kenyan University students aged between 18-30 years
- Identification will be required to show proof of age and the university that one is studying in.
- The essay should be between 1,000 to 1,500 words in word format and have a maximum of 4(four) high resolution pictures with explanatory notes. All entries should also have the following clearly indicated: Full names(as shown in the national identity card) university name, course that one is undertaking, telephone contact and email address
- Clearly indicate the thematic question you are answering, for example Question 1, Question 4, etc
- The essay should be submitted to: International Year of Plant Health Secretariat, KEPHIS Headquarters, Nairobi, iyph@kephis.org. by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - 5pm

## Prizes and Awards

The prizes are as follows: Winner: 30,000; 1st Runners Up: 20,000; 2nd Runners Up: 10,000; honorable mentions: 5,000 for 5 students.

- Winners will receive their prizes during the official opening of the 3rd Phytosanitary Conference in September 2020. Winning essays will also be published in the Seeds of Gold column in the Saturday Nation as well as Hortinews magazine. They will also receive merchandize related to plant health, get certificates from KEPHIS and present their winning essays during the 3rd Phytosanitary Conference 2020.
- Winners will be notified through phone (0709 891 000) and through email: iyph@kephis.org.

For more information, please contact:

International Year of Plant Health Secretariat

KEPHIS Headquarters

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