

As corn withers, biotech companies focus on drought-tolerant crops

The worst U.S. drought in half a century is withering the nation's corn crop, but it's a fertile opportunity for makers of genetically modified crops.

Agricultural biotechnology companies have been pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into developing plants that can withstand the effects of a prolonged dry spell. Monsanto Co., based in St. Louis, has received regulatory approval for DroughtGard, a corn variety that contains the first genetically modified trait for drought resistance.

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