

Transgenic crops cut toxins, boost ecosystem

Environmentalists who are skeptical about genetically modified crops should think again, judging from [a study published last June](#). Researchers reported in the journal *Nature* that transgenic cotton bred to resist pests increases biodiversity by reducing the amount of insecticide sprayed on fields.

The scientists tracked cotton plots in China from 1990 to 2010 as farmers switched from conventional seeds, which require insecticide spraying as many as 15 times a year, to a transgenic variety that produces a protein toxic to crop-ravaging insects like the cotton bollworm. Today so-called Bt cotton is planted on nearly 60 million acres in China, making up more than 95 percent of the country's total crop. The result: "With the Bt cotton, chemical use decreased 60 percent," says Kongming Wu, an entomologist with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

View the original article here: [Transgenic Crops Cut Toxins, Boost Ecosystem](#)