

Entomologists team up to thwart bollworm resistance to Bt cotton

The following is an excerpt.

Farmers have struggled for longer than a century to keep two insect pests – cotton bollworm and pink bollworm – from destroying their cotton crops. In Arizona, where cotton has long been a key industry, growers once battled the pink bollworm and its insatiable appetite for cotton by spraying insecticides. But such sprays are bad for the planet and become powerless when the pests evolve resistance.

A significant new weapon in the battle against bollworms arrived in 1996. Growers in the U.S. began planting genetically engineered cotton that produces an insecticidal protein derived from the widespread bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* – or Bt.

The Bt toxin made by genetically engineered cotton is safe for humans and other non-target organisms but deadly to the caterpillars of pink bollworm and cotton bollworm.

The key to sustaining the success of Bt cotton is delaying evolution of resistance to the Bt toxin in pests.

Read the full press release here: [UA Entomologists Partner with China to Thwart Bollworm Resistance to Bt Cotton](#)