Small scale African farmers reap benefits of genetically modified cotton

Cotton yields in Burkina Faso, one of the few African countries that allow the cultivation of genetically modified crops, have increased 20 percent as a result of decreased pesticide damage, says the president of Burkina Faso's National Cotton Producers Union. As of 2013, over 250,000 small-scale farmers are growing Bt cotton, which is resistant to the bollworm, one of Africa's worst crop pests. Sanu Sibiri, a small-scale farmer who started planting the GM cotton in 2009, has seen his cotton yields rise from 400 kg per hectare of cotton to almost one ton per hectare. Other farmers planting GM cotton have been able to save money that would have been used on expensive chemical pesticides. To reduce the risk of pesticide-resistant insects, an entomologist at Burkina Faso's Environment and Agriculture Research Institute says that conventionally bred cotton should still be grown alongside GM cotton.

Some farmers cannot afford the highly priced Bt seeds, but Burkina Faso is working closely with seed producers to "ensure that the price reduces so that more farmers can embrace the new technology."

Read the full, original story here: African Farmers Reap Gains Of Biotech Cotton