

## Need for GM crops fall as pests populations die off

Populations of European corn borer (ECB), a major corn crop pest, have declined significantly in the eastern United States, according to Penn State researchers. The decline suggests that the use of genetically modified, ECB-resistant corn hybrids—an expensive, yet effective, solution that has been widely adopted by farmers—may now be unnecessary in some areas.

The researchers assessed larval damage in Bt and non-Bt corn hybrids at 29 sites over three years. During September of each season, they assessed corn borer damage on 400 random plants at each site.

“Our results confirm that we are seeing widespread population declines of ECB in the East, similar to declines that have been found in the Midwestern United States,” says Eric Bohnenblust, graduate student in entomology. “With less ECB damage around, non-Bt hybrids yielded just as well as Bt hybrids, so the decline in ECB populations provides an opportunity for growers to generate greater profits by planting high-yielding non-Bt seed, which is much cheaper than Bt seed.”

The team’s results appeared in an early online edition of the journal *Pest Management Science* in December.

**Read the full, original story: [Corn Pest Decline May Save Farmers Money](#)**