

Consumers prefer GMO sweet corn, grown without insecticides, to conventional corn in independent trial

In a farm-to-fork trial conducted jointly by the University of Guelph and Birkbank Farms in Canada, genetically engineered (GE) Bt sweet-corn and Bt potatoes were grown side-by-side with conventional varieties in the 2000 growing season at a farm and market in Hillsburgh, Ontario, Canada. The study was designed to examine the comparative costs and benefits of producing Bt and conventional sweet-corn and potatoes, from the primary producer through to consumer purchasing preferences.

From an economic perspective, only the first planting had pest pressure high enough to warrant the higher seed cost of the GE variety. The seed-corn harvested throughout the trial was segregated and labeled, and direct consumer evaluation of purchasing preferences was conducted.

Overall, the Bt sweet-corn outsold the conventional sweet-corn by a margin of 680 dozen (or 8,160 cobs) to 452.5 dozen (or 5,430 cobs). A limited number of intercept interviews were conducted after consumers made their purchasing decision. The majority of consumers interviewed said they were more concerned about pesticides than genetic engineering; however, taste and quality also had a strong influence on purchasing decisions.

Read the full, original article: Agronomic and consumer considerations for Bt and conventional sweet-corn