

Environmental Working Group: Biotech doesn't deserve credit for reducing soil erosion

Genetically modified crops are unfairly getting credit for reducing soil erosion on U.S. farmland, an environmental group said. In a short report, the Environmental Working Group said soil erosion has declined on cropland because of conservation practices included in the 1985 farm bill and not the planting of biotech corn and soybeans.

“These claims have been repeated so frequently they are now being taken at face value, but a closer look reveals the opposite: GE varieties have made little or no contribution to cutting soil erosion in the United States, and they pose frightening risks to soil and water quality,” said Craig Cox, the Environmental Working Group’s senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources.

The group estimated that soil erosion averaged 4.37 tons an acre in 1982, before falling to 3.44 tons in 1996. It has averaged between 3.05 and 3.08 tons an acre since 2007.

Supporters of biotech crops were skeptical of the study.

“The benefits of (genetically modified) technology — including the increase of no tillage and conservation tillage practices on the farm — are well documented. But the fact is, every farmer needs access to as many tools as possible, and any effort to limit that access benefits neither the farmer nor the environment,” said Karen Batra, a spokeswoman with the Biotechnology Industry Organization whose members include Monsanto and DuPont Pioneer parent company DuPont.

Read full, original article: [Green Fields: Less erosion not due to biotech, group says](#)