

GMO acreage increases globally, especially among small farmers

Farmers are growing substantially the number of acres they plant of genetically modified crops, reveal new figures by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications. Global adoption of genetically modified crops reached 181.5 million hectares in 2014, an increase of 6 million hectares from the previous year. A hectare is equivalent to 2.47105 acres.

What is more, the International Service, a non-profit based near London that licenses genetically modified technologies to farmers, indicates the number of small farmers who plant genetically modified seeds has soared to 18 million. That's up from just 600,000 two years ago.

"Today's figures explode, once and for all, the myth that genetically modified crops are all about big farming and big business," said Dr. Julian Little, chairman of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council, a joint venture based near London that is financed by the world's biggest biotech companies, including BASF, Bayer, Dow, Monsanto, Pioneer/DuPont and Syngenta.

Seed Technology

"One of the major advantages of (genetically modified) is that the technology is contained within the seed, and therefore is just as accessible to resource-poor small-scale cotton farmers in Sudan as it is to large-scale soy farmers in Brazil or the U.S," Little said.

Genetically modified crops planted in emerging and developed countries even surpass those of industrialized countries for the first time. Bangladesh is leading the way in the third world, because it is commercializing a number of new seed technologies widely.

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