

## Environmental impact of US corn, cotton crops halved in last decade thanks to GMOs

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We applied life cycle impact assessment methods to investigate the trends and underlying drivers of changes in non-global environmental impacts of major crops in the U.S.

The results show that the impact per hectare corn and cotton generated on the ecological health of freshwater systems decreased by about 50 percent in the last decade. This change is mainly due to the use of genetically modified (GM) crops, which has reduced the application of insecticides and relatively toxic herbicides such as atrazine.

However, the freshwater ecotoxicity impact per hectare soybean production increased by three-fold, mainly because the spread of an invasive species, soybean aphid, has resulted in an increasing use of insecticides. In comparison, other impact categories remained relatively stable. By evaluating the relative ecotoxicity potential of a large number of pesticides, our analysis offers new insight into the benefits associated with GM crops.

**Read full, original post:** [Changes in environmental impacts of major crops in the US](#)