

GMO corn no more susceptible to Goss's wilt disease than non-GMO corn

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Transgenic crops expressing resistance to the herbicide glyphosate (GR) have been commercialized and planted widely across the U.S. for two decades. The majority of transgenic corn (Bt) also has been engineered to produce toxins effective against certain corn insect pests. In recent years, claims have been made that glyphosate and transgenic traits result in corn plants that are more susceptible to crop diseases.

Such claims have linked the rise in occurrence of corn diseases like Goss's wilt, which causes leaf blight and systemic wilt, to the adoption of transgenic corn across the U.S. However, a new study from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) provides empirical evidence showing no increase in disease susceptibility in transgenic sweet corn treated with glyphosate.

"Results showed glyphosate use and transgenic traits were not factors in disease susceptibility," says Martin Williams, a USDA-ARS ecologist and University of Illinois crop scientist.

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The paper, "Goss's wilt incidence in sweet corn is independent of transgenic traits and glyphosate," appears in the December, 2015, issue of *HortScience*. The paper was authored by Martin Williams, with co-authors Carl Bradley from the U of I, and Stephen Duke, Jude Maul, and Krishna Reddy from the USDA-ARS. Funding was provided by USDA-ARS.

The article is available online at <http://hortsci.ashspublications.org/content/50/12/1791.full>

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