

According to major seed companies, agriculture's next boom may be in Africa

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The 48 countries that make up sub-Saharan Africa have increasingly acute food needs as climate change turns the region's growing seasons more arid. The drought now devastating southern and East Africa, which threatens 50 million people with famine, is just the start, climate forecasters say. The World Bank projects that, given present trends, about 40 percent of the land used to grow corn in sub-Saharan Africa will no longer be suitable for current varieties by 2030.

Monsanto says it has part of the solution. On small plots of land in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, the company—in collaboration with, among others, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—is testing corn varieties that hold up better against dry weather and insects. Monsanto's Water Efficient Maize for Africa project is as much about doing well as it is about doing good. . . .

China has been driving global food trends for almost two decades, and Indian diets are beginning to move world markets. But the biggest long-term payoff for agribusiness may be in Africa. Its population is set to more than double by 2050, to 2.5 billion, according to United Nations projections.

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The raw ingredients for an agriculture boom are in place. Africa has the world's most unused farmland. Crop yields badly trail those in the developed world but could be improved quickly with better seeds and fertilizers. "We see clear potential for Africa to feed its vibrantly growing population," says Tim Bodin, an economist for Cargill.

Read full, original post: [Sowing the Seeds of a Farm Boom in Africa](#)