Kevin Folta: If GMO crops don't meet expectations, why do so many farmers grow them?

Kevin Folta is a professor in and chairman of the Horticultural Sciences Department at the University of Florida, Gainesville. He got his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from University of Illinois at Chicago in 1998, and he previously worked at University of Wisconsin.

The *New York Times* failed again, publishing a less-than-scientific ball of bias that states genetically engineered crops fail to produce as expected. It is a great way to get clicks. But reporter Danny Hakim's analysis contrasts with that of the folks that really understand the benefits and limitations of the technologies– farmers that use it.
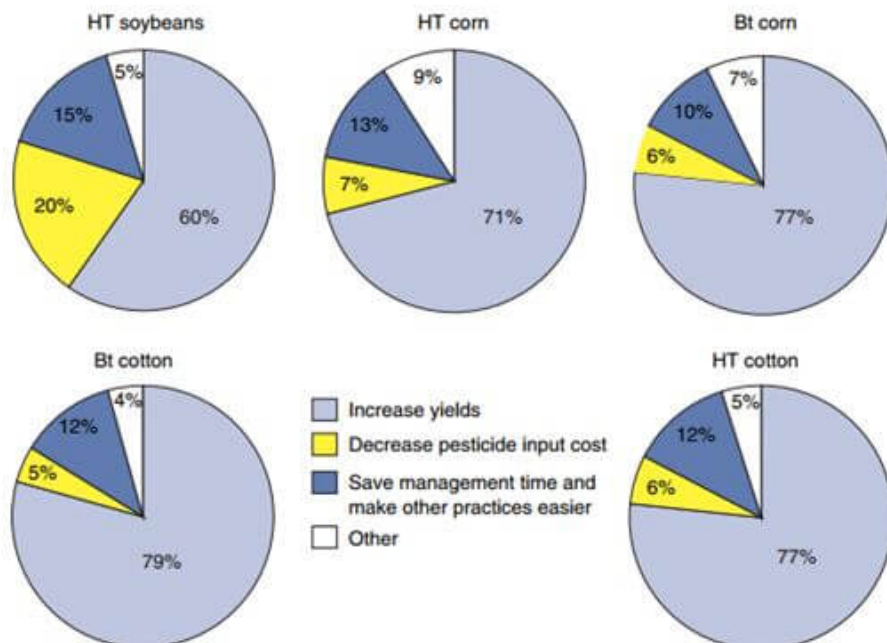
. . . .

We could spend a lot of time reviewing the data he used to reach those conclusions. Instead, to discuss this intelligently you only need to know a couple of points:

No genes for yield were ever installed. The current suite of biotech traits were not meant to improve yields, they were made to *ensure* yields. In other words, they help ag producers farm with lower costs, fewer insecticides, improved weed control and virus resistance in some cases. Same yield at lower cost = better for farmers.

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Farmers are shrewd business men and women. There is a certain arrogance in proclaiming a technology is a failure, when millions of people use it because it works…

Farmers' reasons for adopting genetically engineered crops

HT soybeans
- 5%
- 15%
- 20%
- 60%

HT corn
- 9%
- 13%
- 7%
- 71%

Bt corn
- 7%
- 10%
- 6%
- 77%

Bt cotton
- 4%
- 12%
- 5%
- 79%

Legend:
- ▢ Increase yields
- ▢ Decrease pesticide input cost
- ▢ Save management time and make other practices easier
- ▢ Other

HT cotton
- 5%
- 12%
- 6%
- 77%

Bt crops have insect resistant traits; HT crops have herbicide tolerance traits.

Sources: USDA Economic Research Service using data from Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) Phase II surveys: 2010 for corn, 2007 for cotton, and 2006 for soybeans.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Rehashing a Tired Argument

The pie charts are from a separate post on Folta's blog titled: Some Actual Yield Data