Do GMOs boost yields? ‘Superwheat’ set for field trials boosts harvests by 20%

Genetically modified crops could help us grow more food on less land in a world struggling to cope with climate change, say biologists.

A team of researchers announced .. that they have genetically modified wheat to increase the efficiency of photosynthesis. When the plants are grown in glasshouses, the change boosts yields by 15 to 20 per cent. Now they are applying to the UK government for permission to carry out field trials [beginning in 2017].

What’s more, the modification helps plants takes advantage of the rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. “In higher levels of CO2, this works even better,” Hawkesford says.

The team say they have made other genetic alterations that also boost yields in greenhouse tests, though they are not yet ready to divulge details. Several of these yield-boosting modifications could be “stacked” together in a single strain to create superplants.

The only way the world is going to be able to limit warming to 2 °C is by sucking vast amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, using technology that does not yet exist. What is clear is that it will require vast amounts of land – so we desperately need ways to grow more food on less land. GM superwheat would certainly help.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Trials planned for GM superwheat that boosts harvest by 20%