

Could genetic modification via insects protect crops against agricultural bioterrorism?

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Biological Technologies Office (BTO) has announced a Proposers Day for the new Insect Allies program. The Insect Allies program will seek to “provide an alternative to traditional agricultural threat response, using targeted gene therapy to protect mature plants within a single growing season.” Insect Allies is a unique effort by DARPA to address emerging threats in the agricultural environment, such as agricultural bioterrorism domestically and abroad, as well as food security and production through synthetic biology. New programs, like Insect Allies, represent a recognition by the Department of Defense (DOD) that innovative technologies are needed to combat non-traditional defense challenges.

By exploiting the natural system of insect vectors and the plant viruses they transmit, Insect Allies seeks to increase the resilience of crop plants through the development of “vector-mediated mature plant modification technologies.”

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Sources and Additional Information:

- A synopsis of the Proposer’s Day event is available at <https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=6267a3f5540445d97ebee420a6db7887&tab=...>
- The Special Notice announcing the event with a synopsis of the Insect Allies program is available at <https://www.fbo.gov/utis/view?id=5940328235fcd1671c033a37e7e1f6be>.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Agency Update: DARPA Announces Proposers Day for New Insect Allies Program