

Black market GM cotton seeds flood Chinese market, cutting pesticide use and boosting yields

China is one of the world's top cotton producers partly because of a widespread sowing of banned seeds, according to a joint study by US and Chinese scientists.

An 11-year investigation spanning six Chinese provinces suggested that the black-market cotton seeds cut pesticide use and boosted cotton yields thanks to their long-term resistance to pests.

The study published [May 2017] in the latest issue of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* (PNAS) said the seeds were a hybrid of genetically modified (GM) and traditional cotton plants. The production and trading of such seeds are banned in China.

But in small cotton plantations without much machinery, such illegitimate hybrid seeds might perform better than “pure-bred” GM seeds produced by large biotech companies, the researchers said.

“This is a milestone discovery in agricultural science,” said Professor Wu Kongming, a lead scientist of the research with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences’ Institute of Plant Protection in Beijing.

“Our findings are not only important to cotton production, it also sheds new light on the management and regulation of genetically modified plants.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [How banned hybrid seeds boost China's cotton harvest](#)