

How Asian consumers and farmers are tiptoeing into using GMO crops

High costs, back-breaking work and unpredictable yields compelled Rosalie Ellasus to give up on corn farming....

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But Rosalie changed her mind after the Philippine government allowed companies to release biotechnology corn seed. Scientifically, such a material is known as a genetically modified organism (GMO) or transgenic organism.

Transgenic corn has been genetically engineered to be resistant to pests, herbicides and even drought. With the biotechnology, farming becomes enjoyable and lucrative for farmers like Rosalie because it requires less tillage, pest control and fertilizers.

And most of all, the variety is high yielding.

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"If we don't monitor our land well, we can only get around 3.5 metric tons of corn per hectare with conventional farming but I can get 7.8 metric tons per ha with BT corn," she said.

Since 2002, the Philippines has embraced the BT products, especially BT corn. Filipino farmers have been growing transgenic corn on more than 800,000 ha of farmland.

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Unlike the Philippines, the Indonesian government is also reluctant to consider GMO in its plans to boost agricultural products but, ironically, the country has been a GM product importer for two decades.

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The good news is that some GM crops, including more disease-resistant potatoes that the ministry experimentally cultivates, have a good chance of passing the tests.

Read full, original post: [GMO in times of shrinking land](#) (behind paywall)