

Despite GMO cotton controversy, Burkina Faso still open to GE crops, sterile mosquitoes to combat malaria

Agriculturalists in Burkina Faso say their country is still open to using the tools of biotechnology, despite the decision to stop growing genetically modified cotton.

A controversy erupted over the low quality of fiber produced by GMO (Bt) cotton, prompting a withdrawal of the seeds in 2015 after they had been in use for eight years. Some 70 percent of the nation's farmers were successfully growing Bt cotton, so the decision to halt cultivation caused an uproar. Though farmers say they are now suffering significant crop loss, despite using more pesticides, the cotton traders who control production continue to insist that farmers plant non-GMO varieties only.

But work is still ongoing to develop other GMO products in Burkina Faso, including Bt cowpea and genetically engineered sterile mosquitoes. [...] The Bt cowpea, which infers natural resistance [to the pod borer pest] without the application of pesticides, is expected to help reduce the level of destruction drastically.

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"We are also doing some work on mosquitoes... to control the mosquito population to fight against the malaria. Also we have already issued permits for male sterile mosquitoes... We have issued permits for confined lab [trials]... now we are going to do controlled release," [said Umar Traore of the National Biosafety Agency in Burkina Faso].

Read full, original post: [Burkina Faso is moving forward with GMO research](#)