

Ugandan farmers, scientists hope to bring solution to armyworm invasion blocked by anti-GMO activists

Ugandan scientists are confident that their latest field trials of genetically modified drought-tolerant and insect-resistant maize are yielding promising results, and say the seeds should be ready for farmers within two years — if the political environment improves.

The ongoing trial of Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) hybrids at Namulonge, Uganda, show strong protection against both stem borer and fall armyworm pests, according to Dr. Godfrey Asea, director of the National Crops Resources Research Institute there.

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Farmers across Uganda have battled infestations of fall armyworm in recent years, suffering severe losses as the newly invasive pest proliferates. Maize is a staple crop throughout eastern and southern Africa, and the food security of hundreds of millions of people has been undermined as a result.

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Ugandan scientists had hoped the scene would be set for new GM varieties of maize and other staple crops to be quickly released to farmers when Parliament passed the long-stalled Biosafety Bill last December. However, after vociferous protests by anti-GMO activists, President Yoweri Museveni sent the bill back to Parliament for yet another reconsideration.

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[P]olitically influential anti-GMO activists, who are mainly supported by foreign NGOs, remain determined to prevent Uganda's subsistence farmers from ever being able to access any GM crops.

Read full, original post: [As armyworm invasion devastates crops, Ugandan scientists bemoan GMO political stalemate](#)