

Battling cancer-causing aflatoxin contamination in Africa with genetic engineering, other technologies

We in the rich societies of the world don't hear a lot about [aflatoxin](#). It is probably one of the single largest causes of cancer in the developing world – particularly in Africa. Around a half a billion people are at risk from this toxin in their diet.

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[R]ecently, a Swiss, family-owned grain handling equipment company called Bühler has cooperated with Microsoft to develop a system which can process corn at a rate of 15 metric tons per hour and reject any of the kernels that are contaminated with the nasty chemical aflatoxin. That is both amazing and very cool!

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As revolutionary as this technology promises to be, it is a good thing that it isn't the sole solution. One way to reduce the infection/contamination issue is to intentionally spread a strain of the culprit fungus that does not happen to make aflatoxin. It's a biological control strategy that was first developed by USDA researchers and [commercialized in the US](#), but which has since been re-developed in Africa. Insect resistant, ["GMO" maize](#) also significantly reduces the incidence of the problematic infections. There is also a ["gene silencing" strategy proven by an Arizona State researchers](#) that would prevent the fungus from making its toxin even if it was able to infect the plant.

Read full, original post: [A Remarkable New Technology That Will Diminish A Global Cancer Threat](#)