

## GMO bans leave Europe, Africa vulnerable to fall army worm invasion

A crop-destroying caterpillar that has devastated agriculture in Africa is poised to spread into southern Europe for the first time and could even reach Britain, experts are warning.

Fall Army Worm has cost African economies billions of pounds in crop losses since the American pest was first spotted on the continent two years ago, prompting fears of a humanitarian crisis as millions of farming families face destitution and hunger.

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The problem has been mitigated in America because many genetically modified crop strains used there are impervious to Fall Army Worm. However, in Europe, where far fewer transgenic crops are planted because of widespread opposition to agronomic genetic engineering, farmers are much more vulnerable.

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[A]ll sub-Saharan African states, with the exception of South Africa, presently ban the planting of transgenic crops after a highly effective pressure campaign from European lobby groups opposed to genetic crop engineering.

"Africa needs the political will to embrace the technologies with the greatest potential to achieve agricultural transformation," said Sylvester Oikeh, a project manager at the African Agricultural Technology Foundation.

Despite controlled trials showing that genetically modified maize planted in Africa produce a 52 per cent higher yield than organic strains, most governments are still reluctant to lift the bans, he said.

**Read full, original post:** [Fall Army Worm: On the march to Britain, the deadly pest that devastated swathes of Africa](#)