

Corn bred to 'stand tall' could prevent rotting crops, food waste

When Daniel Robertson was a kid growing up in Columbia, South Carolina, he got chased off by farmers once or twice for playing in their fields. But it wasn't until he was an adult when he realized that the fallen corn he and his friends used to hide in cost these farmers a lot of money.

As a mechanical engineering professor at the University of Idaho, Robertson now studies what's called stalk lodging. New varieties have beefed up how much each plant can produce, but that made them top heavy.

"The grain has gotten so heavy that the wind just blows them over and knocks them down and then the grain falls to the ground and rots," he says.

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Robertson and his team at U of I, University of Kentucky and Clemson University will target certain plant traits that keep them upright and encourage breeders to adopt them in future varieties.

To help find these traits, he takes a CT scan of a plant and uses his mechanical engineering background to find its weakpoints and strengths. These researchers have also developed tools that farmers can use in their fields to pinpoint their weaker crops.

Read full, original article: [This Idaho Researcher Wants To Help Farmers Keep Their Crops Standing Tall](#)