Drought-tolerant corn adoption jumps 20% in four years as US farmers strive to protect crop yields

Droughts have been among the most significant causes of crop yield reductions and losses for centuries….To date, little has been reported about the adoption and use of DT [drought-tolerant] corn in the United States.

This [USDA] report fills that void, examining the development, adoption, and management of DT corn in the United States, emphasizing the roles of recent and frequent exposure to drought, and farmers' moisture-conservation practices, choices of GE seed traits, and irrigation.

Most crop farmers have limited options to reduce the damaging effects of drought. Producers with access to ample sources of irrigation water can, at least partially, mitigate certain drought stress. However, many water-intensive crops—including corn—are mostly grown on non-irrigated cropland.

Drought tolerance in corn is a characteristic that has been the subject of research for decades, but has only recently been commercialized. Drought-tolerant (DT) corn produced using conventional breeding methods was commercially introduced in 2011. Hybrids genetically engineered (GE) for drought tolerance were introduced in 2012, but were not broadly available until 2013.

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Over one-fifth of U .S . corn acreage was planted with DT corn in 2016 . DT corn accounted for only 2 percent of U.S. planted corn acreage in 2012. By 2016, this share had grown to 22 percent. The pace of adoption is similar to the adoption of herbicide-tolerant corn in the early 2000s.

Read full, original article: Development, Adoption, and Management of Drought-Tolerant Corn in the United States