Podcast: Bt eggplant in Bangladesh—the GMO crop that boosted farmer profits 6-fold

Subsistence farmers in Bangladesh make a living by growing, harvesting and selling brinjal, or the fruit westerners know as eggplant. The biggest threat to production is the fruit and shoot borer, an insect larvae that digs into the fruit and can destroy as much as 45 percent of a farmer's crop.

Arif Hossain

To combat this persistent pest, farmers traditionally use massive amounts of insecticide, 80-100 sprays per season—approximately one application every other day over three months. This began to change in 2014 after regulators approved Bt brinjal, a genetically engineered crop that produces a natural protein toxic to the fruit and shoot borer. The crop boosted farmer revenue 6-fold, utterly debunking the activist trope that Bt Brinjal was a failure in Bangladesh.

On this episode of Talking Biotech, Arif Hossein, head of Farming Future Bangladesh, joins University of Florida's Modesta Abugu and Kevin Folta to explain how GMO brinjal dramatically improved life for farmers in the country.

https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/195-hossain2.mp3

Modesta Abugu is a Nigerian native and University of Florida graduate student. Follow her on Twitter @modestannedi. Kevin M. Folta is a professor in the Horticultural Sciences Department at the University of Florida. Follow professor Folta on Twitter @kevinfolta and email your questions to kfolta@ufl.edu

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