

Natural pest-control market could hit \$10 billion by 2025, as farmers seek new tools to battle pesticide-tolerant bugs

For decades, Adam Baldwin's family used chemicals with multisyllabic names to keep caterpillars such as earworms and podworms from chomping their corn, soybeans, and sorghum. While the pesticides were generally effective in getting rid of the hungry invaders, they also killed beneficial insects such as ladybugs So for the past two years, Baldwin, a fifth-generation farmer in McPherson County, Kan., has used a lab-grown virus that takes out the caterpillars while leaving other bugs alone.

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The virus is one of a growing number of tools that provide natural protection for crops, ranging from bacteria to insect sex pheromones to substances derived from spider venom. Global sales of such products will double to \$10 billion annually by 2025, researcher DunhamTrimmer LLC predicts.

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Pests, fungi, and weeds reduce crop yields by as much as 40% globally, costing \$1.4 trillion a year, according to CABI, an English nonprofit that researches agriculture. The damage is growing as many insects develop resistance to established treatments, which spurs farmers to spray even more chemicals on their fields.

Read full, original article: [From Lethal Viruses to Insect Sex, Farmers Use Bugs to Kill Bugs](#)