Ugandan field trials demonstrate significant economic benefits for farmers growing insect-resistant Bt maize

African scientists have demonstrated that genetically modified Bt maize offers much higher yields and better pest resistance than conventional varieties — traits that could greatly improve food security on the continent.

In their study, published in Science Direct, the researchers show that Bt maize hybrids significantly reduced stemborer damage, which is a principal drawback to maize production in Uganda and many parts of Africa.

Adopting Bt maize could help Uganda’s farmers guard against grain yield losses associated with stem borers, which would help improve household food security, incomes and livelihoods, the study finds.

And by growing Bt maize, Uganda would also eliminate or reduce the costs associated with the use of insecticides and lessen the dangers to humans and the environment due to pesticide misuse or overuse.

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Conventional methods of controlling the stem borer range from using a rotational cropping system to applying chemical and biological pest-control products. The scientists deem these methods ineffective, particularly in the African smallholder context, due to financial challenges and the labor and knowledge-intensive nature of the mitigations.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.