

Suffering from devastating pest infestations, Ethiopian cotton farmers resort to using illegally smuggled GMO seeds that have controlled the same problem in Brazil

Cotton growers in Ethiopia resort to unauthorized GMO cotton illegally smuggled from Sudan. Bt-RR cotton seed is currently being cultivated in Afar, Metema, Benishangul Gumuz and Gambella regions after being smuggled via Metema, Humera and other border areas between Sudan and Ethiopia.

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The cotton farmers *The Reporter* talked to underlined that the smuggled cotton seed is preferred mainly because it resists bollworm, which has been devastating the existing local cotton breeds. This is because a one-time chemical spray on the vegetation is also highly effective in eliminating all weeds except the cotton itself.

The productivity of the Bt-RR is between 10 and 14 quintals per hectare, slightly superior to the local varieties. But the Bt-RR is advantageous mainly because it beats the bollworm, and requires less pesticide.

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Melkamu Telake, board chair of the Ethiopian Cotton Producers, Ginners, and Exporters Association, says farmers are resorting to smuggled seed as access to other cotton seeds depletes. "The government failed to provide the type of seed preferred by the farmer."

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The meager productivity of local cotton farming has been the Achilles heel for Ethiopia's aspirations to become the manufacturing hub of Africa, mainly capitalizing on textiles, garments, and apparel.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)