Ghana’s newly-approved pesticide-free GMO cowpea poised for market introduction later this year

A new Genetically Modified (GM) cowpea variety developed by the Savannah Agriculture Research Institute (SARI) is set to hit the Ghanaian market by the end of 2023.

According to the developers, the new cowpea which is Ghana’s first ever GMO crop will increase the yields of farmers by nearly 300 percent.

The Institute has been working on the GMO cowpea which it says is resistant to Maruca pod borer, an insect pest that destroys over 50 percent of cowpea pods in the country and can only be controlled by spraying insecticides at least eight times in their three-month life cycle.

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Mr. [Jerry] Nboyine said with the GMO cowpea, farmers will no longer have to apply insecticides because the crop itself has now been developed to be more resilient against weeds and pests.

“We’ve done a lot of assessment on the cowpea that we’re releasing in terms of its impact on the environment, its impact on human health and there’s a lot of data and information to show that it is as safe as the conventional one and even much more safer because it is more safer [than] insecticides that normally have a lot of health implications when people eat these cowpeas that are sold in the market” [Nboyine] explained.

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