

GM herbicide-tolerant crops reduce overall herbicide use

 geneticliteracyproject.org/2017/01/11/gm-herbicide-tolerant-crops-reduce-overall-herbicide-use/

Editor's Note: This blog by geneticist Anastasia Bodnar evaluates whether claims made by the biotechnology industry that GM foods decrease the use of herbicides.

Do GMOs live up to the promises of the biotech industry?...[The] claims here are that "Biotech is helping to feed the world by: Lowering volumes of agricultural chemicals required by crops- limiting the run-off of these products into the environment [and] Using biotech crops that need fewer applications of pesticides."



Verdict: *Promise met*

Looking at the most up to date [EPA data on agricultural pesticide use](#), we see that use of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and other conventional pesticides (such as miticides) all have a downward trend between 1998 and 2007.

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[T]he USDA and EPA researchers [say] in their [Conservation Tillage, Herbicide Use, and Genetically Engineered Crops in the United States: The Case of Soybeans](#) (paraphrased):

Most researchers measure herbicide use by the total pounds of active ingredients applied. While this is informative, these of these studies can be biased by unobservable conditions prevailing in the year of the study. Also, when different types of active ingredients are grouped together, it covers up the fact that their characteristics (potency, toxicity, etc.) vary widely.

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The total amount of herbicides is trending down and the total environmental impact due to herbicides has decreased. While we can't be sure if HT crops were the cause of the total decrease in herbicide use, we can be reasonably certain the change in herbicide types was due to HT crops.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The Promise of GMOs: Herbicides](#)

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