GM CROPS
A story in numbers

In the nearly two decades since they were first commercialized, genetically modified (GM) crops have gained ground on their conventional counterparts. The vast majority are grown in five countries. Four crops feature, with two main traits: herbicide tolerance and insect resistance.

The global picture
Twenty-eight countries planted 170 million hectares of GM crops in 2012, but most crops were grown in just five countries: the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Canada and India.

1.5 billion hectares
Arable land worldwide

170 million hectares
of GM crops worldwide

18 million hectares
Rest of world

152 million hectares
In top five countries

The United States produces more GM crops than any other country. GM varieties account for about 90% of the total area planted in cotton, maize (corn) and soya beans.

Political opposition forced the GM potato, used for industrial starch, off the market in Germany and Sweden.

Cuba planted its first GM crop, Bt maize, last year.

Sudan planted Bt cotton for the first time in 2012.

In China, the sixth-highest adopter, 7.2 million farmers planted 4 million hectares of GM crops.

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**Mixed growth**

Growth for many of the largest GM adopters has slowed, but Brazil is continuing to see large annual leaps with 21% (6.3 million hectares) more GM crops planted in 2012 than 2011.

**Popular crops**

GM soya bean, maize (corn), cotton and canola crops accounted for nearly all GM crops grown in 2012.

**Popular traits**

Of some 30 traits that are currently engineered into plants for commercial use, the most popular are those that confer herbicide tolerance, insect resistance or both traits together.