have already undergone some of the changes that can lead to a maize cob–like morphology.

Maize, although productive, cannot be used as a crop everywhere. It is a C_4 plant adapted to warm regions with high solar irradiation. Wheat, rye, and barley, however, grow in cooler climates and under different edaphic conditions. Barley can grow not only under more arid conditions but also with water of higher salinity than wheat or rye[1]. Genetic improvements of wheat yields were achieved mainly through changes in the harvest index (grain biomass/total biomass), rather than through increased biomass production (ref. 12 and citations therein). However, in recent years, the evidence has grown that increased wheat biomass production is feasible[12].

Many components of plant biology contribute to productivity. In maize, the morphological changes that occurred in the process of domestication resulted in both higher productivity and superior grain quality. A similar gain resulting from parallel changes in wheat, rye, and barley could be very useful.

Although cereal genomes have been reshuffled since their taxa diverged during the Tertiary period, many blocks of genes have remained in the same order, even in new chromosomal locations[13]. It should be possible to clone most of the genes in wheat, rye, and barley that are homologous to maize genes, or to transform these species with maize genes and produce new types of GM crops.

These new crops may provide one solution to ameliorating food shortages arising from the world's burgeoning population. A better understanding of the developmental biology of cereals (a small group of plants that provides almost 75% of human nutrition) should also further motivate this research. Using modern genetics, we should be able to do with wheat, barley, and rye what prehistoric Americans did with teosinte when they changed it into maize millennia ago.

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Correction

On p. 20 of the January 2002 issue, an author was omitted from the correspondence entitled "Protein delivery using VP22" by Robert P. Bennett and Brian Dalby. An additional author, Pamela M. Guy, also contributed to this work. The correct authors for the correspondence are Robert P. Bennett, Brian Dalby, and Pamela M. Guy. The authors apologize for the error.

Erratum

On p. 208 of the March 2002 issue, the Business and Regulatory News Analysis story "Troubled big pharma turns away from biotech" contains an editing error. The text, "Patent expirations are one reason; BMS's Taxol, Eli Lilly's (Indianapolis, IN) Prozac, Merck's Mevacor and Pfizer's Accupril all recently went off-patent. These were soon followed by, among other blockbusters, Schering Plough's Claritin and Merck's Prinivil," should have read, "Patent expirations are one reason; BMS's Taxol, Eli Lilly's (Indianapolis, IN) Prozac, Merck's Mevacor and Pfizer's Accupril all recently went off-patent. They are soon to be followed by Schering-Plough's Claritin and Merck's Prinivil, among other blockbusters." Claritin and Prinivil are not yet off-patent. *Nature Biotechnology* apologizes for the error.