

TECHNOLOGY

Improving Lives

Helping Corn Weather The Storm

(NAPSA)—Technologies developed to protect crops from insects have helped farmers tell bad weather to bug off.

For instance, in-plant insect control developed through biotechnology is helping corn perform even in drought conditions. The technology helps make crops heartier, with a well-protected, fuller root system that enables plants to more effectively absorb limited subsoil moisture and nutrients, a factor that is particularly important during dry spells.

In-plant corn rootworm control was especially useful during recent growing seasons in many parts of the Corn Belt, where farms were forced to weather unusually dry conditions. In fact, Dave Rhylander, Director of Traits for Monsanto, a major seed producer, says the use of a corn called YieldGard® Plus Corn with in-plant insect control had visible results during the drought—and that results were even more apparent as dry conditions spread.

The corn, with maximum in-plant insect protection, outperformed conventional corn hybrids in 2005 and continued to perform well in 2006. It's been shown to be taller and healthier, with better root systems, than conventional hybrids treated with soil- or seed-applied insecticides.

"We're seeing some reports of a foot difference in plant height in some of the drier areas," says Rhylander.

Farmers who planted corn with the technology this season also saw a positive difference. "As for overall plant health, the corn looks better and I think with the dry conditions you're going to get



YieldGard Plus Corn (right) provides better protection against corn rootworm than conventional corn hybrids (left), resulting in a fuller root system even in dry conditions.

more roots than conventional corn," says grower Scott Jensen of Tiskilwa, Illinois. "That way it can take up more nutrients, and it can take up what water is there."

An added benefit to the in-plant insect control corn is the convenience of less pesticide handling. "It gives us a way to get insect protection without having to apply insecticides," says Paul Shubeck of Beresford, South Dakota. "The performance seems to be really good, and of course when we get to the stage when we are evaluating the yield, that will be the determining factor."

Last year, the in-plant insect control corn outperformed conventional hybrids by an average of 11 bushels per acre across the Corn Belt and 30 bushels per acre or more in severe drought areas such as Illinois. YieldGard rootworm technology was planted on 10 million acres in 2006, making it the industry's leading rootworm control system.