

# Biotechnology well represented on Canada farmland

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## EXTRACT

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## ARTICLE CONTENT

While Canada's farming scene may be largely known for its maple sugar producers, the biotech farming industry appears to be making a name for itself as well, based on how many agriculturists planted them.

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Lorne Hepworth, president of the plant science innovation trade association CropLife Canada, said it's little wonder that so many farmers are trending toward the usage of biotechnology to enhance their harvests.

"Farmers see the benefits in terms of improved yields and quality, environmental sustainability and efficiency," said Hepworth.

He added that Canadian farmers are some of the most experienced in the world and are constantly looking to improve themselves. Genetically modified produce helps ensure food supply lines remain abundant.

CropLife notes that more than two dozen countries are known to use biotechnology to enhance crop yield, with Canada being one of the places in which its utilized by many farmers. In fact, it's believed to be fourth in the world when it comes to the amount of crops that have been planted with some type of biotechnology enhancement. The only countries where its use is more ubiquitous is in the United States, Brazil and Argentina. These three countries also happen to be among the worldwide leaders in corn production, as noted by the Corn Refiners Association. More than 307 million metric tons of corn are produced in Canada's neighbor to the south each year.

### **Most of Ontario's sugar beets biotech-grown**

Other than canola, other types of fruits and vegetables that Canadian farmers will often use biotechnology for are sugar beets. The London Free Press reports that almost all of the sugar beets grown in Ontario are genetically modified.

The paper also reports that based on a report from the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, it's likely that more of today's crops will be genetically modified tomorrow.

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"Anecdotally we know biotech companies are pursuing modern plant breeding techniques to improve other crops," said CBAN's Taarini Chopra, according to the news source. "The pace of innovation is increasing."

Much of what crop yield relies on is weather conditions, as overly dry or wet weather can wreak havoc on what a farmer can expected to get come harvest time. Family farm insurance provides for these potential risk factors, covering farmers from issues ranging from loss of income to produce, livestock, machinery malfunctions and building damage.

Ontario farm insurance plans are in operation throughout much of the region. Statistics Canada notes that the province has more farms than any of the other 10, as more than a quarter of the country's 205,700 farms are based in Ontario.

