



Spain is one of the two countries planting biotech crops in the European Union, planting 124,227 hectares biotech maize in 2017.

In 2017, two countries in the European Union (EU), Spain and Portugal, planted biotech insect resistant maize event MON810, the only biotech event approved in the EU.

The total biotech crop area in the two countries in 2017 was 131,535 hectares, a slight decrease of 4% from the 2016 biotech maize area of 136,363 hectares. Spain planted 124,227 hectares and Portugal planted 7,308 hectares.

Spain has been planting biotech maize for 19 years since 1998, and in 2017 has contributed 91% of the the total biotech maize area in the EU.

There were 13 regions in Spain that planted biotech maize. The autonomous regions of Aragon and Catalonia had the highest share of Spain's biotech maize area at 71%, because the insect pest European corn borer is endemic in these areas.

In 2017, there was a decline of 4% in biotech maize area due to poor crop margins, and the EU-wide move to eliminate ingredients

sourced from biotech crops. Total area planted to maize varies every year based on water availability, crop margins, competition from alternative crops, and public incentives in place.

Despite counter-productive efforts of the EU, Spain has steadfastly and successfully grown insect resistant (IR) Bt maize after opting not to ban growing of biotech crops in the country in 2015. Field trials are also permitted in Spain, although they are subject to prior notice and authorization.

The increasing maize demand for food and feed consumption in Spain has increased throughout the years, with some 7 million metric tons of maize imported in 2015-2016, coming from the United States, Ukraine, Brazil, and Canada (USDA FAS GAIN Report, Agricultural Biotechnology Annual, Spain, 2017).

BENEFITS FROM BIOTECH MAIZE

Some 5,500 farmers have benefited from growing biotech maize in the period 1998 to 2016, at an estimated US\$275 million and are

estimated to have reached US\$23 million in 2016 alone (Brookes and Barfoot, 2018). These are enormous benefits continuously being enjoyed by farmers in Spain in the last 19 years of Bt maize adoption.

SOURCE

ISAAA. 2017. Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops in 2017: Biotech Crop Adoption Surges as Economic Benefits Accumulate in 22 Years. *ISAAA Brief* No. 53. ISAAA: Ithaca, New York.

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