

Estimating the Potential Economic Benefits of Adopting Bt Cotton in Selected COMESA Countries file

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Cotton farmers in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) face pest challenges, the most destructive of which is the African bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*). Reduction in these pest infestations can increase yields and improve welfare of cotton producers, consumers, and innovators. Currently, the control of bollworms in this region is done through application pesticides, which is a costly exercise in terms of cost of pesticides, spray equipment, and labor. A more effective and less costly way to control damage from bollworms and other insects that frequently damage cotton in the region is by adopting Bt cotton. Governments in COMESA region are debating whether to approve Bt cotton for commercial production. This decision requires empirical evidence showing the likely magnitude of anticipated gains for producers, consumers, and innovators of the technology. Using an economic surplus framework, this study shows that there are welfare gains from adopting Bt cotton in the region, and countries that are not adopting Bt cotton are losing. Overall, most gains accrue to Egypt while Kenya gains the least. However, gains per hectare are similar in all countries except Egypt, which gains about four times the other countries.

Key words: Bt cotton, COMESA economic benefits, economic surplus model, impact assessment, risk.

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