

## GM crops benefit Southeast Asia

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Genetically engineered crops benefit Southeast Asian regions, including the Philippines, Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduates Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) Director Glenn Gregorio said in a forum on Philippines Biotech Regulations.

According to the local media, Gregorio said In Southeast Asia, 630,000 hectares of farmlands are now planted with Bt Corn for \$729 million in economic benefits.

"The Philippines is the first country in Southeast Asia to implement a regulatory framework on genetically engineered crops. In 2003, the Philippines also became the first Southeast Asian country to commercialize and plant a biotech crop, Bt Corn. Since then its adoption rate has reached almost 100 per cent, its 97 per cent, and has covered more than half a million hectares, now it 630,000 hectares and it has led to an estimated farm level of economic benefits of \$720 million," Gregorio said.

"In addition to Bt Corn, we now have Bt Talong and excitingly we have the Golden Rice already. They are harvesting Golden Rice for distribution, and it is approved for commercial cultivation. These and other biotech crops in the pipelines can potentially contribute to attaining food and nutrition security, improving farmers' income, health, and economy, and ensuring environmental protection," he said.