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Monsanto, BASF announce corn gene that can combat drought

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Monsanto and BASF scientists announced the discovery of a naturally-occurring gene that can help corn plants combat drought conditions and confer yield stability during periods of inadequate water supplies.

The companies stated that they will use the gene in their first biotechnology-derived drought-tolerant corn product, targeted for commercial introduction as early as 2012 pending regulatory approval.

Robb Fraley, Monsanto's chief technology officer, said the drought-tolerant corn will be another tool to help farmers meet the challenges facing agriculture.

According to Monsanto and BASF, the gene was first identified in bacteria subjected to cold stress conditions and further research demonstrated that it helps corn plants maintain growth and development during times of inadequate rainfall. The findings were published in a peer-reviewed paper in the journal, *Plant Physiology*.

Drought-tolerant corn technology is part of an R&D and commercialization collaboration in plant biotechnology between BASF and Monsanto that began in March 2007.

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