

# Celebrating Earth Day 2012



## An Environmental Success Story: Agricultural Biotechnology



**Farmers have adopted biotechnology since 1996 because biotech crops grow healthier plants that yield more per acre with reduced production costs.**

**But planting biotech crops also helps to enhance soil, air and water quality.**

## Making Farming More Earth-Friendly

### Protecting Soil, Air and Water

Agricultural biotechnology continues to provide **significant environmental benefits** as it makes positive contributions to global food production and food security. Biotech crops don't just increase yield and productivity, they also reduce on-farm fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions while lessening the need for insecticides and pesticides.

Peer-reviewed scientific studies have repeatedly found biotech varieties to be much friendlier to the environment, more sustainable than conventional counterparts, and far more economical and productive than organic.

***“Improvements in water quality could prove to be the largest single benefit of GE crops.”***

- National Research Council, April 13, 2010

Low or no-till agriculture, in limited use prior to 1996, has enabled farmers to shift to simpler, more effective agronomic practices leading to improved soil health and water retention, reduced pesticide runoff, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

New developments help American farmers produce crops that use water more efficiently. Biotech-derived crops also allow for higher productivity on land currently under cultivation, preventing the conversion of tropical forests and land used for other, non-agricultural purposes to farmland.



- **In 2009, the combined savings of carbon emissions from biotech crops was equivalent to removing almost 8 million cars from the road. \***
- **During the period that biotech crops have been in use (1996-2012) biotech crops have reduced pesticide spraying by 865 million (-8.7 percent). Reduced pesticide applications also means farmers use less fuel.\***

