



**Sergio Valencia**  
**Llanos Orientales**  
**Colombia**

## “I do prefer biotechnology!”

Though Sergio Valencia was born in Armenia, Colombia, he currently farms on the Llanos Orientales (Eastern Plains), an area known for its potential for agricultural development.

During his 20-year farming career, Valencia has planted corn, soybeans, coffee, citrus, tomatoes, passion fruit, banana and African palm. In 2009, after hearing about the many benefits of biotech crops, he decided to try planting biotech maize.

Today he has 60 hectares of biotech maize planted on his farm, and Valencia believes he made the right choice because “this kind of corn has a significant[ly] better yield than the conventional” maize.

In his opinion, the use of biotech maize has produced better results than conventional maize because of the advantages it offers in controlling pests, diseases and weeds.

Valencia admits that biotech maize seeds are slightly more expensive than conventional seeds; however, he believes this “extra expense” is an investment into his crops and farm. In the long run, this investment translates into overall savings, because planting biotech maize reduces the application of inputs. This reduction allows for considerable savings in production costs.

Valencia explains that in a conventional maize crop he would spend about 500 thousand pesos (approx. US\$250) per hectare during a farming season. However, by planting biotech seeds, he has been able to reduce that amount to just 70 thousand pesos (approx. US\$35) per hectare. The use of biotech seeds has enabled him to save 86 percent in costs per hectare.

This, added to other tangible benefits this technology offers, such as less tillage, gives him the possibility to have more effective control of his crops: “which means I get to enjoy more free time! I can focus in other activities in my farm or ...just rest!”

Biotech crops offer great advantages not only for farmers but also for the environment (the practice of minimum tillage which reduces soil erosion and fuel use).

For all these benefits, surely Sergio Valencia says today “I do prefer biotechnology!”.

From now on he will continue to grow biotech crops in this region of Colombia, which has been catalogued as one of the most promising territories on agricultural development and production.

