New discovery could lead to improved corn yields

A key component of the work Corteva Agriscience's R&D team does to discover and develop innovative technologies for farmers is collaboration with other companies and academic institutions. A recent example comes from collaborative research conducted by our R&D team and the VIB-UGent Center for Plant Systems Biology (VIB), an independent research institute where approximately 1,800 top scientists from Belgium and abroad conduct pioneering research.

The research, which was published late last month in *The Plant Cell*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal, identified a gene that can help determine the longevity of silk viability in maize (corn). Silks are the sticky part of the flower to which pollen attaches. To produce fruits and seeds, plants need to be fertilized when a flower is receptive to viable pollen. With this new discovery, researchers have an opportunity to enhance fertility not only in maize, but also in other crop plants to improve their yield.

Tom Greene, **Senior Research Director and Leader of Biotechnology,** said, "For decades, we have known that silk receptivity is a critical component to determining grain yield in maize. Now that we also know one of the key genes that control this natural function, we can target this gene to further enhance maize productivity for our customers, helping to drive higher yields."

"This discovery and our collaboration with the VIB-UGent Center for Plant Systems Biology has the potential to help us address one of the many pressures farmers face: the ability to do more with less in more precise and planet-friendly ways," according to **Jeff Habben, Technical Director.**

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