

ILL WINDS FOR CROPS

Pollution-sensitive crops in the US are suffering yield losses of up to a fifth as a result of high ozone levels, according to a new report from the Washington-based World Resources Institute.

Crops species at risk include kidney beans, corn, peanuts, soybeans, cotton and winter wheat. The WRI calculate that a two-fifths reduction in ozone levels would lead to a \$3.5 billion annual benefit in increased yields from eight major crops. Ozone levels high enough to damage crops have also been measured in Britain during several recent summers.

The authors of the WRI study conclude that 'unless pollution levels are significantly reduced, we can look forward only to further forest damage, crop losses, ill health, water and soil acidification, damage to materials and visibility losses'.

James J. MacKenzie and Mohamed T. El-Ashry; Ill winds; airborne pollution toll on trees and crops, World Resources Institute.

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