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**Supplementary figure 1:** Contrast between unsprayed and fungicide-sprayed maize treatments at the Greytown trial. (a) Leaf necrosis and lowered photosynthetic capacity from northern leaf blight disease is evident in unsprayed hybrid maize at grain filling stage. (b) Northern leaf blight symptoms are absent in hybrid maize at grain filling stage in rows treated with fungicides.

Supplementary table 1: Agro-ecological zones for sampling sites in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces of South Africa

Field site	District municipality	Name of zone	Description	Altitude	Rainfall range
				(metres above sea level)	(mm)
Hlanganani	Harry Gwala	Temperate Forest	Uplands region	1066	750–1125
			(900–1400 m altitude)		
Ntabamhlophe	uThukela	Moist Highland Sourveld	Highland region	1494	875–1250
		Moist tall grassveld	(1400–1800 m altitude)		
KwaNxamalala	uMgungundlovu	Temperate Forest	Uplands region	1145	750–1125
		(Ngongoni)	(900–1400 m altitude)		
Bizana	Alfred Nzo	Temperate Forest (broken	Lowland region	823	Average 1022
		Ngongoni)	(450–900 m altitude)		(no range provided)
Tabankulu	Alfred Nzo	Sandy Sourveld	Uplands region	941	625–875
			(900–1400 m altitude)		
Greytown	Umvoti	Temperate Forest	Uplands region	1110	750–1125
		(Ngongoni)	(900–1400 m altitude)		

Source: Data from Pentz<sup>1</sup>

## Reference

1. Pentz JA. An agro-ecological survey of Natal. Pretoria: South African Department of Agriculture and Forestry; 1945.