

Ugandan scientists develop disease-resistant banana, but law may prohibit it from reaching farmers

Banana bacterial wilt, a disease caused by *Xanthomonas* bacteria, is so devastating to banana and extremely burdensome and costly to a farmer. It attacks the banana plant turning its sap into “pus” that oozes out when cut.

In extreme cases, the plant wilts before fruiting and incase it gets to fruit, it ripens before it matures for a farmer to reap from sweat. It was first recorded in Uganda in 2001 but been in Ethiopia in the 1960's. This wilt attacks all cultivars of banana from the beloved Matooke to the sweet types causing up to \$2.2b estimated annual loss.

Dr. Leena Tirupathi, one of the scientists that have been researching on Banana bacterial wilt in her article in the New Vision, on whether biotechnology can save Uganda's banana crop pointed out the need to have the solutions to the wilt before it destabilises the food security in the region. She confirmed having banana lines which are 100 percent resistant in three cycles, implying suckers from suckers were 100 percent resistant.

The next step she said is carrying out multi-locational trials before the resistant banana can be availed to farmers. As she correctly stated, without the law, some of these final steps may not be realized and that would mean farmers will continue to buy JIK detergent to disinfect their pruning knives after every plant reducing on their profits and government will continue to spend more money in managing the disease instead of investing that money in Agricultural Research.

Read full, original article: [Banana bacterial wilt being managed but at what cost?](#)