

## Ugandan scientists develop wilt resistant GMO banana, field trials this year

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Crop scientists at National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) say they have made a breakthrough in developing cooking banana varieties, which are resistant to Banana Bacterial Wilt (BBW).

For the last 15 years, farmers and scientists have been searching for ways to eradicate the wilt, which has spread to all banana-growing areas in the country. BBW causes rotting of the plant and fruit and can wipe out the entire plantation if no control measures are taken. It has no chemical treatment, and to prevent the wilt from spreading, an infected plant must be uprooted and destroyed. This makes eradicating it a hard task.

...[T]he scientists said that in collaboration with a number of partnering institutions, they have developed genetically modified (GM) matooke [bananas] that have shown 100 per cent resistance to BBW. ... This year the scientists will be doing first trials outside Kawanda at Mbarara Zonal Agriculture and Research Development Institute (in Mbarara District) and Bulindi Zonal Agriculture and Research Development Institute in Hoima District.

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It has taken five years to develop the BBW-resistant bananas. The field trials will take three years. ...

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Uganda is the second leading producer of bananas in the world after India producing 12 million tons annually. As many as 75 per cent of farmers in Uganda grow bananas for food and income security.

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The researchers said if the wilt is not contained Uganda is likely to lose \$953 million from sale of bananas annually. ... However, for the BBW resistant bananas to be grown across the country for consumption will require passing of National Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill 2012 into Act.

**Read full, original post:** [NARO starts trials on banana bacterial wilt resistant varieties](#)