

Talking Biotech: Uganda farmer-scientist on benefits of GMO disease resistant bananas

Uganda is at an interesting precipice. They have invested in biotech solutions to solve problems in their central food staples, namely the matooke. The matooke is a starchy banana, and while a cornerstone of the diet, it is threatened by disease. Most people are farmers, and tend to 'gardens' of 2-3 acres, these are subsistence farmers that use the gardens to feed their families. Xanthomonas bacterial wilt can destroy entire stands of trees. But scientists in Uganda have used breeding and genetic engineering to generate genetic lines that stop major diseases. The sad part is that the improved plants are not allowed to be distributed due to the lack of a national biosafety law. The second part of the podcast is an interview with Clet Masiga. He is a trained crop scientist, but also a farmer, and I spoke to him on his farm about the needs of Ugandan farmers, changes in policy, and broken down cars.

Most of all, you need to understand that providing the best technology to people in need is simply justice. Justice.

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