

## Uganda approves open field trials for disease-resistant GMO bananas, paving way for 2021 release

Researchers at the National Agricultural Research Laboratories (NARL) in Kawanda [Uganda] have said they are ready to go for open- field trial of the genetically -modified banana, before it is released to the public in 2021.

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[O]pen-field trials ... means that they will test the banana varieties with the farmers and the farming communities to make sure they can resist the bacterial wilt in different agro-ecological zones.

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The GM varieties are meant to resist banana bacterial wilt and they are also pro-vitamin A to fight malnutrition among most communities around the country.

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The banana bacterial wilt resistant gene was got from green pepper, which is an edible crop while the pro-Vitamin A gene, was got from a banana variety not grown in this region but only found in South Eastern Asia.

These genes are added into the already existing varieties to make them resistant to banana bacterial wilt and become pro-vitamin A.

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Bacterial banana wilt was first reported in Uganda in 2001 – all regions were affected, with central and western regions most hit

It was estimated the country lost up \$4bn in ten years from the wilt destruction – this is about 17 percent of the country's GDP.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:** Ugandans to Have GMO Matooke in 2021 – Researchers