

Vitamin-A fortified GMO banana may finally debut in Uganda in 2021, 16 years after research began

Ugandan scientists are eying a 2021 release date for genetically modified bananas fortified with vitamin A, provided the nation passes its biosafety law.

In 2005, Ugandan scientists began using the tools of biotechnology to breed bananas fortified with vitamin A. Their goal was to help rural families suffering from a deficiency of the nutrient, which is essential for proper growth, maintenance of the immune system and good vision.

To date, the 13-year research effort has shown promising results, with the genetically modified (GM) banana variety expressing 100 percent vitamin A content

...

Dr. Stephen Buah, program leader for the fortified banana research at [the National Agricultural Research Laboratories], said the breeding program began when scientists determined that a good number of rural communities, particularly in Western Uganda, are deficient in vitamin A and iron.

Some 28 percent of Uganda's preschool age children and 23 percent of pregnant women are deficient in vitamin A and iron, according to World Bank statistics. Scientists at NaRL felt it was better to incorporate vitamin A into food than to encourage pregnant women and mothers to buy vitamin A and iron tablets, especially since they often do not have the resources to buy supplements.

Since banana is a dietary staple for many Ugandans, it was a likely candidate for fortification.

Read full, original article: [Ugandan scientists poised to release vitamin-fortified GMO banana](#)