

## Uganda's young cassava farmers want access to GMO crops

Though Uganda's Parliament passed a biosafety bill [the week of November 26], it remains unclear whether it will benefit a coalition of young cassava farmers who are demanding access to genetically modified (GM) crops.

Some Ugandan scientists have said the bill's [strict liability clause](#) will effectively stifle the research and commercial release of crops that government researchers developed to address the nation's agricultural woes. The current state of affairs has frustrated young farmers who are trying to make a living from agriculture, but facing serious disease pressures that limit cassava yields.

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The cassava growers belong to the Young Farmers' Association, which is under the umbrella of the Uganda National Farmers Federation. They represent 10 different districts, mainly in central Uganda where cassava has been hard-hit by the brown streak and mosaic viruses.

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"In the case of cassava, I can testify how it has changed my life," said [young cassava farmer George] Semwanga, who cultivates 10 acres of land in the Nakasongola district. "But I am not satisfied in growing a hybrid variety which is likely to succumb to cassava brown streak virus. I need to venture into growing the GMO variety which is resistant to diseases. It is my prayer that politicians should desist in blocking research initiatives to reach the end users."

**Read full, original article:** [Young Ugandan farmers push for homegrown GMO crops](#)