THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

NARO

BANANA BACTERIAL WILT (BBW)

NAADS

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES



When I was in Bubaare Kashaari, I was shocked. I found there bananas with a very bad smell, like a rotten thing with pus. When our cattle still suffered those uncivilized diseases that would attack their rear parts and ears, you would feel such a smell. I never imagined that even plants could have such a bad smell. Its true plants do have smells; these ones smell in their own way. But they do not smell as if they are rotten. So that is the shock I got when I went to Bubaare to see for myself the enemy who wanted to hit us where it pains most. That's why I called that disease Kajuude.

Scientists call this disease Banana Bacterial Wilt (BBW).

This disease is a tempter like the devil. The disease rots down banana plants and the bunches. Fortunately, this disease is preventable. Never flee from the sound of running feet before you see what is chasing after. You might flee from that sound and get lost. But when you stand still you find that you were fleeing from a cock.

This disease is not hard to fight because of the ways through which it spreads. It spreads through two ways only. It is spread through farm tools like pangas, it also spreads through stingless bees which suck fluids from flowers or sap from plants which comes out when flowers fall from the male bud. The sap comes from where the flower falls from. The insects suck the fluids. The insects then move from the male bud of the diseased banana to the banana which is not diseased. And it infects it. This is the second way through which the disease spreads.



The ways through which this disease spreads do not scare me. They are easy to control. What if this disease was spreading through wind, or soil, and the banana roots sucks it, what could we have done? Banana plants close to one another cannot infect each other and even if you cut an infected plant, lay it on the ground and let it rot there, the pathogens there in cannot survive in the soil. They will die off within 45 days. Remember that some pathogens like those of anthrax can take like 50 years in the soil and can still spread the disease. But it is not like this with banana bacterial wilt.

There are only two ways: using farm tools like a panga, a hoe etc. and insects sucking the fluids from where flowers have fallen from the male bud. So, let us control this enemy, (the disease) through these ways:

1.When your plantation is attacked by the wilt stop cutting banana fibres , cutting the leaves and pruning for three months. And do not use the hoe to weed your plantation. Use only your hands to weed. When you see an infected banana cut it at ground level put it down and let it rot there. It is not necessary to uproot it with its roots and burry it because it is a waste of energy. It means that in the three months your panga has only one major function- cutting infected banana plants laying them on the ground and you let them rot there.

2. When you want to cut a banana for home consumption or for sell, first immerse your panga and wash it with jik. Mix the Jik using one measure(one cup) of jik to five measures (five cups) of water. Spend like 10 minutes washing the panga in that mixture of jik. When there is mass cutting of the diseased bananas you don't need to immerse the panga into jik solution. You are taking preventive measures to prevent what! the bananas are already diseased. Can the dead infect each other?.

3.Another way is to remove the male bud after the banana clusters have spread apart. When the last cluster spreads, do not go beyond one week without removing the male bud and put it down to rot. When removing the bud, do not use a deleafer (oruhabyo), I beg you. Use a long forked stick with two edges. Hold the bud with the two edges, twist and break. Our experts say that when you twist the male bud, it does not break from where the forked stick is touching. It breaks from above the edges. The stem that remains on the side of the banana bunch is not touched by the edges. Therefore, the experts say that using one forked stick in one plantation, is not dangerous. You also first try it and see how the buds break when you twist them with forked sticks. I was worried about it. But experts have assured me that it has no harm as the bud does not break at the two edges holding it. It breaks just above them, as I have already told you. Therefore, the forked stick does not spread the disease, does not cause the banana plants to infect others.



These three ways shall help us to control the banana bacterial wilt. But the government has not relaxed in its fight against banana bacterial wilt. Our experts are searching for banana suckers that can be resistant to banana bacterial wilt. Each time when there is massive death of living things some with strong genes survive. Whenever people died of smallpox in large numbers, some of them with strong natural immunity would survive even before immunization came. An example is rinderpest in cattle. This disease would kill the cows massively but some few with strong genes would survive .

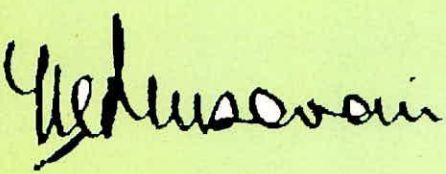
The rinderpest that hit in 1893 found my grandfather Kashanku son of Kyamukanga Ruhimbura in Rujumbura. Our ancestral home is Rushenyi (of Ruyonza and Kashanda), but the Beene-Kihondwa, who are our relatives, whenever they would wrong us , we would withdraw our allegiance from them and pledge our allegiances to Beene – Kirenzi of (Rujumbura).To pledge allegiance to is to subject to another rule of the new king.The1893 rinderpest attack found my great grandfather in Rujumbura for the second time, he was coming from Bwishikatwa (Kajara and Rushenyi) our ancestral home. Herds of cattle died massively including those of my great grandfather. But my great grandfather had only seven cows that survived. Currently, I own thousands of cattle, my brothers have cattle, Mzee Kaguta owns herds of cattle, my Paternal uncles have herds of cattle –all of them coming from those survived by Kashanku in 1893.Those cows survived mass death without medicines for vaccination.



I therefore had hope that even if banana plants die of bacterial wilt, there could be some plants which can survive this disease. But experts say they have not seen them yet. You might find that they have not got enough time to research. The disease is still new. Bogoya is very susceptible. Because they could not find banana plants with genes resistant to bacterial wilt, the experts did not hesitate they borrowed red pepper genes mixed them with those of bananas and made a banana plant resistant to bacterial wilt. They are now testing that plant to see its characteristics in different situations: In the laboratory, in the green house and in gardens. They say it is doing well.We hope to have a banana plant that is resistant to bacterial wilt – like we got coffee that is resistant to coffee wilt.

Therefore I call upon all farmers to heed to this advice so that we eliminate this bacterial wilt disease from Uganda.

Iam



Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

THE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA.





H.E SPEECH DELIVERED DURING THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES HELD BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2011 - JUNE 2012. THE REGIONAL VENUES WERE MBARARA, KABAROLE, JINJA, MBALE AND ENTEBBE STATE HOUSE.





NAADS SECRETARIAT ADDRESS

National Agricultural Advisory Services

Plot 5, Kyadondo Road.

Legacy Towers Block B,Nakasero.

Tel: 256-414/312-345440/345065/ 345066/345060.

Fax: 256-414-347843.

Email: info@naads.or.ug

NAADS

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES