

**Title** Banana and plantain research at CARBAP: evaluation and post-harvest research for development

**Author** K. Tomekpe

**Citation** Program and Abstracts, Banana 2008, Banana and plantain in Africa: Harnessing international partnerships to increase research impact, Leisure Lodge Resort, Mombasa, Kenya, 5-9 October 2008. 198 pages.

**Keyword** banana; postharvest

### **Abstract**

Plantain is one the most popular staple foods in West and Central Africa. In order to boost the production of this important local crop, the government of six countries in Central Africa created in 2001 the African Research Centre on Banana and Plantain (CARBAP). CARBAP is a base-centre of the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development. The centre hosts and supports the coordination of the West and Central Africa *Musa* network. CARBAP works to contribute to increase plantain and banana productivity through research, training, development and partnership activities at national and regional levels. Research programs focus on five major areas (i) genetic improvement and variety delivery, (ii) agronomy and ecological intensification, (iii) sustainable plant protection, (iv) post-harvest technologies and (v) market chain, innovation and knowledge management. Sustained efforts were made these last years to evaluate the reference collection of CARBAP, in particular for post-harvest characteristics of plantains and cooking banana origination from Papua New Guinea. Evaluation of micronutrient and dry matter content has been particularly targeted, but research is also underway to develop improved banana and plantain-derived products such as flour. In addition, new cultivars including black Sigatoka resistant and dwarf hybrids were obtained by conventional breeding broadening the indigenous plantain diversity and the variability introduced by Papua New Guinea cultivars. Concerted efforts to evaluate the new cultivars in different production system are ongoing using a participatory approach. Recent advances on cultivar development and on post-harvest characteristics will be presented. Diversified and integrated strategies based on innovative technologies and new approaches will be discussed.