New coffee varieties developed

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The National Agricultural Research Organisation (Naro) in collaboration with breeders at National Coffee Research Institute (NaCORI), Kituza in Mukono District, have introduced three new robusta coffee varieties for both smallholder and commercial farmers.

The developed varieties projected to yield more than double the current varieties include; Naro-Kituza robusta 8 -for 2/22/2; Naro-Kituuza robusta 9 -for 245/21/5; Naro-Kituuza robusta 10 -for 3/15/1.

According to breeders, the new varieties which are resistant to diseases such as the dreaded seven Coffee Wilt Disease (CWD) will help farmers cut costs incurred in controlling diseases.

For a long period of time small scale coffee farmers have been harvesting about 10 to 15 bags of 110 kilogrammes per acre against a potential production of 50 bags per acre.

This is set to change with the introduction of the new high yielding varieties. The head of NaCORI, Dr William Wagoire, said his team started research work on the drought-tolerant coffee variety using the conventional methods, where they picked coffee plantlets at random and grew them under drought conditions.

"And the varieties that survived the drought stress were selected and have been put under further multiplication and will be given out to farmers once the multiplication process is complete," said Dr Wagoire.

Job Chemutai, a coffee and cocoa breeder at NaCORI, Kituuza, says the improved robusta coffee varieties can yield in excesses of three metric tonnes of clean coffee beans per acre in a year.

"These three varieties are at least 90 per cent resistant to leaf rust and red blister disease. They also have large and heavy beans desired by the market," Chemutai explains.



Mr Twine stands in one of the trial gardens for the new Robusta Coffee at Kituuza in Mukono at NACCRI. PHO
BY DAVID MAFABI

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