

Scientists develop army worm resistant maize

BY DAVID MAFABI

dmafabi@ug.nationmedia.com

Farmers have all reasons to smile after it has emerged scientists at Naro, have successfully developed resistant maize variety.

The scientists say this could be the lasting solution to the fall armyworm that has ravaged more than half of the country posing a significant threat to food

security.

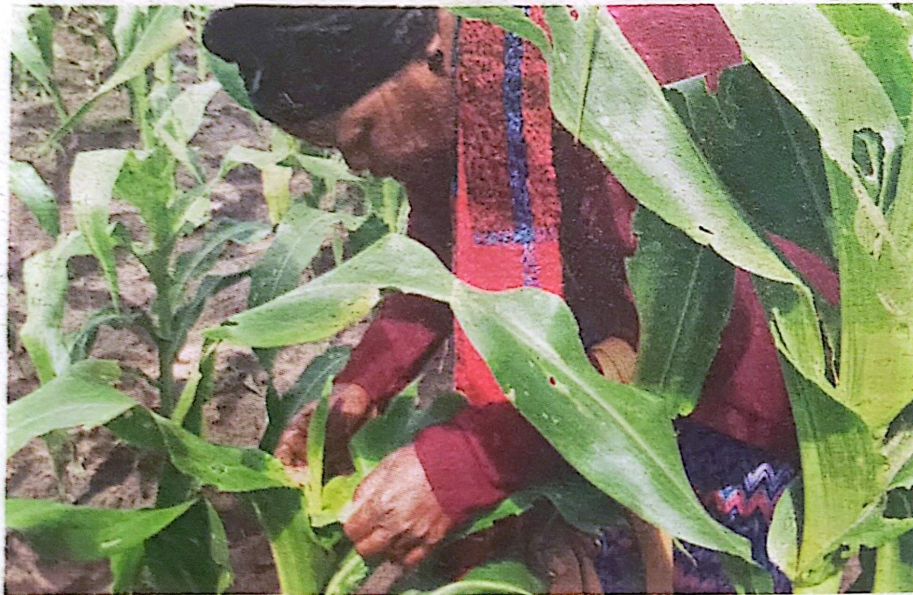
Clet Masiga Wandui, a crop breeder at Naro, revealed as BT Maize the resistant variety which was bred using genetic approaches.

Masiga who is also a scientist at the Tropical Institute of Development Initiative was addressing farmers in Mt Elgon sub-region on banana value chain and biotechnology consultative meeting at Mt Elgon Hotel in Mbale.

He said in order to increase pest control efficiency and delay resistance evolution, a gene pyramiding strategy has been employed in transgenic plants to produce two or more Bt toxins of dissimilar mode of action effective against the army worm and other pest species.

"Bt maize has been adopted rapidly and are expected to become even more prevalent in the future but we cannot bring it out for farmers until the National Biotechnology and Bio-safety Bill 2012 is passed into law by parliament," said Masiga.

Minister of state for agriculture, Christopher Kibazanga, described the news of the BT maize as a great breakthrough for Uganda.



A farmer examining some of her worm-infested maize in her garden recently. COURTESY PHOTO

