



# Banana Systems in the Humid Highlands of Sub-Saharan Africa

Enhancing Resilience  
and Productivity

Edited by **Guy Blomme, Bernard Vanlauwe**  
and **Piet van Asten**

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# Preface

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*Banana Systems in the Humid Highlands of Sub-Saharan Africa: Enhancing Resilience and Productivity* addresses issues related to intensification of banana-based cropping systems in the (sub)humid highland areas of Africa. Bananas are a staple food in the East African highlands, where they have some of the highest per capita consumption rates in the world. The crop is a permanent source of food and income throughout the year for millions of smallholder farmers. Its reliable and continuous production has spared the humid highland region from drought-induced famines that have plagued other areas in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the permanent canopy cover and self-mulch of banana-based systems also prevent run-off and erosion in this hilly landscape. However, in times of rapid population growth, urbanization and increasing regional trade, actors in the private and public sector are particularly encouraging the production of easily tradable and storable dry foods such as maize. Bananas have further suffered from major pest and disease outbreaks over the past few years. Maintaining and enhancing the socio-economic and biophysical buffer function of banana-based systems has, therefore, become a formidable challenge that affects the livelihoods of millions of poor producers and consumers in the region.

This book brings together key contributions on banana-based systems that were presented as part of an international conference that was organized by the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA) and was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 24 to 27 October 2011. The conference was entitled the *Challenges and Opportunities for Agricultural Intensification of the Humid Highland Systems of sub-Saharan Africa*. The information that is presented in the 28 chapters of the book is based on research carried out in the Great Lakes Region by CIALCA and partners, and is arranged in six sections. Part 1 covers banana germplasm, Part 2 innovative seed systems, Part 3 pests and diseases, Part 4 cropping systems, Part 5 postharvest use and nutrition, and Part 6 technology adoption and dissemination of knowledge. The book provides a valuable resource for researchers, development actors, students and policy makers in agricultural systems and economics and in international development. It highlights and

addresses key challenges and opportunities that exist in maintaining and improving the vital buffer function that bananas provide in the agricultural systems of the humid highlands of sub-Saharan Africa.

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