Organic treatment for banana crown rot

An organic treatment for banana crown rot, developed in the Philippines, could cut back on the need for chemicals to treat the disease

Dr Dionisio Alvindia told the Manila Bulletin that banana crown rot was caused when fungi infected the crown of the fruit through wounds inflicted during trimming.

The disease was controlled at present by dipping hands or clusters of the fruit into a fungicidal solution, which was not ideal as prolonged use of such solutions could lead pathogens to develop a resistance to the treatment, said Mr Alvindia.

Without treatment bananas begin to show signs of the rot within 21 days, which greatly affected retail value.

PhilMech director Ricardo Cachuela told the newspaper the discovery was significant to the banana industry in the Philippines and would particularly benefit exporters.

He added that it would cut down on the amount of chemical residue on the fruit. This would be useful when the fruit was exported to countries with strict regulations on chemical residue levels, such as Japan.

The treatment was currently being patented and Mr Cachuela reported a number of cooperatives and agri-businesses had approached the organisation about using it in their operations.

Mr Alvinda said the treatment could also be used on pineapple and papaya, although more work would have to be done to test its efficacy.