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2. Tropenobstbautag

dedicated to Prof. P. Lüdders for his achievements in the field of
(sub) tropical fruits

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Book of Abstracts

Enbrapa

P 8. Recent Appearance of Black Sigatoka in Banana Plantations of Brazilian Amazonia

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Black Sigatoka caused by *Mycosphaerella fijiensis* is the most important banana disease worldwide. In December 1997, symptoms of the disease were first observed in Tabatinga and Benjamin Constant near the border of Brazil with Colombia and Peru. Meanwhile, the disease has been disseminated in the whole state of Amazonas and had already reached the states of Acre and Rondônia. Similar to other tropical areas where local populations are suffering from food shortage, the banana is considered a basic food in Amazonia. The banana cultivars 'Maça' and 'Prata' and the plantain cultivar 'Pacovã' which are used by the local population are extremely susceptible to black Sigatoka, and losses can be as high as 100%. Most of the banana plantations in this region have already been destroyed by the disease and the population is already feeling the shortage of the fruit. As control strategies, resistant banana cultivars are being distributed to the local population, and quarantine measures are being adopted to impede the dissemination of the pathogen into other banana-producing regions of Brazil. If the quarantine measures do not impede the dissemination of the pathogen from the northern region into the banana-producing regions in the northeast, southeast and south of Brazil, the annual banana production is expected to drop from 5,720,000 tons to 1,716,000 tonnes. The situation is complicated because the country possesses about 520,000 ha planted with banana cultivars susceptible to the disease. The substitution of these cultivars by resistant cultivars can take about 10 years, as about 900 million plants will be necessary and the infrastructure is presently only capable of producing 90 million plants per year. As a consequence, the only solution in the short and medium term is the chemical control of the disease, which will require about 37,440 tons of protective fungicides or 3,120,000 liters of systemic fungicides per year, implicating incalculable damages to the environment.