



In search of the perfect color for bananas



As highlighted by the FAO, “Banana is one of the most important staple foods in the tropical areas, and its production for sale in the local markets is, together with milk production and horticulture, one of the few activities that provide family units with a regular income throughout the year”. This motivates us to improve this fruit’s productivity, which, in addition, is threatened by the Fusarium R4T. In my most recent trip to Colombia, I visited banana farms in the Chigorodó and Apartadó areas. Our customers seemed to be applying the fertilization plans correctly. However, the fruit was not reaching the desired size, although it had the optimal taste and consistency. Shortly after the bananas were harvested, a certain black coloring appeared on the skin, a so called ripeness stain, produced by a calcium deficiency during the fruit’s development. What did we do? We started to apply a fertilizer based on potassium nitrate. It is a more efficient formula, rich in nitric nitrogen, which supports the plant’s metabolic activity at a time when low temperatures slow down the development of the fruit. This way, larger fruit is obtained. At the same time, nitric nitrogen has a synergic effect on the absorption of magnesium, potassium and the above mentioned calcium, the lack of which causes the ripeness stain. The result is already obvious to the producers - larger bananas and no stains.