

# Prof. George Nape Pioneer fighter against the cassava mosaic

By Vision Reporter

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**By Samuel Lutwama**

IN 1988, Professor George Nape got a directive from the agriculture ministry to research about a strange disease that had devastated cassava plantations in most parts of Buganda, including Luweero.

Nape set up a team of researchers from Serere Research Station, in Serere district, to establish the extent of the damage. Their discovery showed that the disease, cassava blight, had destroyed large hectares of land.

A graduate of agriculture, Nape pioneered research on the mosaic virus, which earned him a promotion. He came up with two strategies; spraying the affected plants and getting species of cassava that were generated using the materials got from Nigeria and South America.

At the time (1988), there was an insurgency in eastern Uganda and it was hard to access the materials from Serere. Nevertheless, he succeeded in getting a few stems which were put on rapid multiplication. "Within a year, we had enough materials to experiment in other places. In a short time, the epidemic was contained," Nape reminisces.

He also came up with resistant varieties, insecticidal control of insect disseminators and cultural methods of controlling the disease.

Because of his innovations in fighting the disease, Nape has received numerous awards. President Yoweri Museveni recognised him with the Presidential Science Excellence Award in 2008.

Nape was born on June 12, 1950 in Kole district. He went to Bala Primary School, Dr Obote College and later Boroboro Secondary School for the East African Certificate of Education (A-Level). He lost his father two weeks to his A-Level exams, but he was able to perform well. In 1973, he joined Makerere University for a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree. He said his decision was influenced by his love for cassava.

In 1991, he went back to Makerere University for a masters in Plant Pathology. He earned his PhD in the same field at the University of Reading in the UK.

Nape is married to Joyce and the couple has five children. He is the head of the Africa Innovations Institute in Uganda.

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- See more at: [http://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1011696/prof-george-nape-pioneer-fighter-cassava-mosaic#sthash.Hstm0gUs.dpuf](http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1011696/prof-george-nape-pioneer-fighter-cassava-mosaic#sthash.Hstm0gUs.dpuf)