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# Characteristics and control of a new basidiomycetous root rot of cassava (*Mannihot esculents*) in Ghana

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**Abstract.** Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) is one of the most important food crops in the tropical world. Diseases such as African cassava mosaic virus (ACMV), cassava bacterial blight (CBB) and cassava anthracnose (CAD) constitute a major constraint to cassava production in parts of sub-saharan Africa. A mushroom type of fungus previously known to be parasitic on forest tree species has in recent years been found attacking cassava and causing high yield losses in some of the major cassava growing districts in Ghana. Surveys have established presence of the disease in the Volta, Central and Ashanti regions of the country. Major symptoms of the disease include wilting and defoliation and eventually plant death. Storage roots of infected cassava plants are often rotten and result in yield losses as high as 100%. Local and improved genotypes of cassava available to farmers in endemic areas are susceptible to attacks by this fungus. The large, bright yellow fruiting body produced by the fungus is characteristic of the basidiomycete *Polyporus sulphureus* (*Laetiporous sulphureus*). Citrus and a number of important timber tree species are also hosts of this fungus. Results from field screening of cassava genotypes indicate that materials with high levels of resistance to this fungus are available.