

Control of sweetpotato virus disease through Farmer Field Schools approach in Kagera region, Tanzania

Rwegasira G.M.¹, Marandu E.F.¹, Gibson R.W.² and Kapinga R.E.³

¹Maruku Agricultural Research Institute, P.O Box 127 Bukoba, Kagera, Tanzania

²Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, Central Avenue, Chatham Maritime, Kent, ME4 4TB, UK

³International Potato Center (CIP), P.O Box 22274, Kampala, Uganda

Abstract. Sweetpotato, *Ipomea batatas* (L) is an important crop grown for food and income generation in Tanzania. In Kagera region, it is the most important crop grown by resource poor farmers. The crop has recently become even more important due to the decline in banana production due to pests and diseases. Despite its importance, poor soil fertility, pests and diseases affect its productivity. A survey conducted in 2003 indicated sweetpotato virus disease (SPVD) was a major problem that needed immediate attention. SPVD, a disease caused by a synergistic interaction between the white flyborne Sweetpotato Chlorotic Stunt Virus (SPCSV) and the aphid-borne Sweetpotato Feathery Mottle Virus (SPFMV), is a major threat to sweetpotato production particularly in Bukoba and Muleba districts. Various

control techniques including use of resistant varieties and phytosanitation were considered and implemented through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach. In the current study the practical procedures on effective implementation of SPVD control techniques based on FFS approach have been explored. Socio-economic factors affecting adoption and farmers' responses to the FFS approach are indicated. Problems related to FFS in Kagera region are documented and solutions suggested.