Abstract

Field trials were conducted in Kenya with ‘Nakyetengu’, an East African highland banana cultivar (AAA-EA), highly susceptible to banana pests. Regardless of soil fertility levels, incorporation around the plant base of powdered neem (Azadirachta indica A. Juss.) seed or cake at 60-100 g/m² at 4-month intervals, gave better control of the banana weevil, Cosmopolites sordidus (Germar), and of parasitic nematodes, than that achieved with soil application of Furadan 5G (carbofuran) at 60 g/m² at 6-month intervals. Compared with untreated control, fruit yield in most of the neem treatments was significantly higher, particularly during the second cycle of crop production. Neem application conferred a net economic gain, whereas Furadan application proved uneconomical. Application of powdered neem seed or cake at higher rates (200–400 g/m²) at 6-month intervals caused phytotoxicity, resulting in drying up of banana plants before fruiting, or in ‘chokethroat’, i.e., inflorescence emergence failure.