

# Pack 103, Item 8

Type: Drama

March 2016

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**Mr. Bana’s mill: Quality standards for fresh potatoes and cassava**

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**Notes to broadcaster**

To ensure that food is safe, to help farmers and processors, and to improve value chains, governments help create and enforce standards for growing and processing foods such as potatoes and cassava.

Standards are detailed guidelines for producing safe, high quality produce. They cover all aspects of production, processing, labeling, and transportation. The National Bureau of Standards in each country collaborates with other stakeholders to create and enforce these standards.

When producers and processors follow standards, product quality improves, producers and processors can expect increased income, and consumers are assured of safe, high quality products. Also, trade and marketing across national borders is possible, as is the case with the East and Central African harmonized standards for potatoes and cassava. While this drama deals with standards in East and Central Africa, there could be very similar standards in your country. Do some research to find out.

This eight-scene drama shows how potato and cassava growers and processors can grow and prepare these crops. The script talks about standards for harvesting, storing, processing, and packing cassava and potatoes.

You could use this drama as inspiration to produce a similar program on standards for cassava or other crops in your area. Or you might choose to present this drama as part of your regular farmer program, using voice actors to represent the speakers.

You could follow the drama by interviewing a cassava or potato processor, a farmer who grows cassava or potatoes for the processing market, or an expert on the potato or cassava value chain. Invite listeners to call or text in with questions and comments. Topics for discussion might include:
• What are the best opportunities for growers to sell for the processing market?
• Under what conditions should a farmer process his or her own cassava or potatoes, and when should the farmer go to a processor?
• If a listener wants to start a small-scale processing business, what steps should be taken to research the market and determine whether there is an opportunity for profit?

Estimated running time: 20 minutes, with intro and outro music.

# *Note: This is the second in a series of four items on cassava and potato standards in East and Central Africa. The first,* [Cassava is wealth: New harmonized standards for processing cassava flour in East and Central Africa](http://www.farmradio.org/radio-resource-packs/pakage-99-cassava-the-post-harvest-value-chain/cassava-is-wealth-new-harmonized-standards-for-processing-cassava-flour-in-east-and-central-africa/)*, was published in September, 2014 in Resource Pack #99. The third and fourth in the series will be published in future Resource Packs.*

**NARRATOR:** Potatoes and cassava are important root and tuber crops and are a great source of energy in many parts of the world.

Millions of farmers in Eastern Africa grow cassava and potato, mostly for home consumption or to sell fresh in the market. By processing and adding value, farmers can make even more money. Both crops are rich sources of raw materials for industries, such as the starch used in pharmaceuticals and textile-making. But to process potatoes and cassava, farmers must grow crops that meet the processing standards.

The roots of both crops do not store well, especially cassava. They need special care during storage and processing, and effective drying to increase their shelf life.

As part of efforts to help farmers grow cassava and potatoes in the region, the East African community has developed harmonized standards for farmers to follow in order to tap into more lucrative markets such as cross-border markets and processing industries.

In today’s drama, we learn about these standards for harvesting, storing, processing, and packing cassava and potatoes from a man who has been running a processing centre for over 15 years … Welcome to Mr. Bana’s Mill.

**Scene 1**

**Location: Exterior. Bana’s mill. Day**

**Background SFX: Milling machine**

**Kosia, Zebra**

**SFX 1:** A VERY OLD CAR ROARS TOWARDS MIC AND STOPS

**SFX 2:** CAR DOOR BANGS

**KOSIA:** (CLOSE TO MIC, MUTTERING IN ANGER) Oh, this car is tired! Tired!

**ZEBRA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC, PROJECTING VOICE) Mr. Kosia, your car is aging fast like its owner! (LAUGHS)

**SFX:** CAR DOOR BANGS AGAIN

**KOSIA:** (SWEARS) The Devil! This car door! I am going to pluck it off one of these days and make a charcoal stove out of it!!!

**ZEBRA:** (LAUGHS A LOT) What’s the matter?

**KOSIA:** Never mind. Zebra, is Bana back from the city?

**ZEBRA:** Not yet.

**KOSIA:** Good. My milling machine isn’t working anymore! The spare part you sold me is dead.

**ZEBRA:** It was not dead when I sold it to you. It was just old, NOT DEAD.

**KOSIA:** I want another one, a new one.

**ZEBRA:** I can't sell you a new spare part. Bana would ask for it, and I’d lose my job.

**KOSIA:** Your stupid boss has been gone for two months; the processing centre is in your hands. You tell him it developed problems.

**ZEBRA:** Mr. Bana has been running this processing centre for 15 years; he always knows when I am lying.

**KOSIA:** Okay. Can you come and fix the machine for me?

**ZEBRA:** No.

**KOSIA:** Why not?

**ZEBRA:** Mr. Kosia, you don’t pay. I have repaired your machine six times in two months; you have never paid me a coin. I can’t keep coming to your mill. I have my boss’s work to do; I have been spending more time there than here.

**KOSIA:** All right, I will pay you today. Come and work.

**ZEBRA:** Let me switch off the machine and we go.

**Scene 2**

**Location: Exterior. Bana’s processing centre. Day**

**Background SFX: Bicycles, bodabodas**

**Bana, Zebra**

**BANA:** (TALKING TO HIMSELF, CLOSE TO MIC) This place seems to be closed … It’s 3 in the afternoon! Where is this man? (CALLING) Zebra … Zebra … (LOUDER) Zebra! (MUTTERINGWITH ANGER) This is preposterous! Did this man abandon my processing centre? Where are my keys?

**ZEBRA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC) Oh, Mr. Bana, you have come. You are welcome, sir.

**BANA:** (VERY STERN) How long have you been away from this centre, Zebra?

**ZEBRA:** Just 30 minutes, sir. I had gone …

**BANA:** Thirty minutes? To me it’s like you’ve never stepped here in the two months I have been away. Look at how overgrown the compound is!

**ZEBRA:** Sir, I made sure the grass here in front is kept short all the time!

**BANA:** But you are supposed to clear grass all around the structures, Zebra! When you leave the grass around the processing centre to grow, you invite rats! Rats are destroyers. They enter the store and eat the flour … they bite holes in the bags, they urinate everywhere … they leave droppings! Is that how I will maintain my customers?

**ZEBRA:** I am sorry, sir; I failed to find time …

**BANA:** Where are you coming from?

**ZEBRA:** Uh … I had gone for lunch.

**BANA:** Your hands are full of grease! Clearly you’ve been fixing a machine!

**ZEBRA:** The truth is, Kosia needed my help at his mill!

**BANA:** Unbelievable! Zebra, I am banking on you! My wife is sick and I have to keep going back to the city to look after her. You have to keep this place super clean! Both inside the structures, and outside them!

Goodness me. Do you want to finish us? Do you remember when the officers from the Bureau of Standards were here and they trained us and told us all we needed to do to ensure our flour was up to the East Africa Standards? They certified our flour so now I can sell up to Tanzania and Uganda as long as our flour has the mark of quality. So we need to maintain this quality, including the cleanliness of the premises.

**ZEBRA:** Yes, sir.

**BANA:**  Now, get working! Don’t do anything else before you clear this overgrown grass – and that stagnant water!

**Scene 3**

**Location: Exterior. Martha’s home. Day**

**Background SFX: Chickens, goats**

**Bana, Martha, Tony**

**NOTE:** SOUND OF SPREADING CASSAVA CHIPS ON MATS

**TONY:** (CLOSE TO MIC) But mother, isn’t the cassava dry now? Why are we turning it again? And why must we wash our hands every time?

**MARTHA:** (CLOSE TO MIC) Give it a few more hours! Spread it here.

**SFX:** DRY CASSAVA POURED ON PAPYRUS MAT

**MARTHA:** I think we need more papyrus mats.

**TONY:** But why can’t you dry it on the ground, instead of having to pay for these mats?

**MARTHA:** Because it gets dirty.

**TONY:** Dirty?

**MARTHA:** Yes. Why do you look at me like that?

**TONY:** (SURPRISED) You spend all that money on mats just to keep the cassava clean? They get a little dust from being dried on the floor. But when they’re milled into flour no one sees the dust. (LAUGHS) I think you just waste money for nothing.

**MARTHA:** Cassava chips get dirty, son, and it affects the flour. Mr. Bana taught us how to process the chips to supply his processing centre. He said it’s important because his flour is being exported all over East Africa now that it has the Bureau of Standards mark. He is paying us very well to keep the dried cassava chips super clean.

**TONY:** Did you say Mr. Bana now exports his cassava to other countries?

**MARTHA:** Yes. To Uganda and Tanzania. He says the East Africa countries decided to harmonize their standards for cassava, cassava chips and cassava flour to ensure they are safe and good quality and farmers can easily trade across the region. If farmers and processors follow the standards, they get more money. And they are assured of markets inside and outside of the country.

**SFX:** CAR MOVES AND STOPS AWAY FROM MIC

**TONY:** (CLOSE TO MIC) Mother, look! Mr. Bana’s car.

**SFX:** SPREADING CASSAVA CHIPS STOPS

**SFX:** CAR DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES AWAY FROM MIC

**BANA:** (MOVING TOWARS MIC) Madam, Martha! Good work, good work. Tony, how are you?

**TONY:** I am okay, sir.

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHING HAPPILY) Happy to see you, Mr. Bana! Welcome back home!

**BANA:** Thank you, Martha. How has your life been?

**MARTHA:** We are fine, we are fine. How is your dear wife faring lately?

**BANA:** Not very well. I just had to come back because I was getting worried about my business and my home. I plan to go back as soon as I can; because she is not okay … she needs me. Our children are doing their best to look after her, but they are busy.

**MARTHA:** So sorry about that, sir. But we are praying for her. God will see her through.

**BANA:** Keep us in your prayers indeed. But I am really worried about my manager, Zebra.

**MARTHA:** What do you mean?

**BANA:** I am not sure he will handle things without supervision. In the two months I was away, the mess I found was unbelievable!

**MARTHA:** Oh sorry.

**BANA:** Well, life is not always the way you want it! So is this the cassava for me?

**MARTHA:** Yes. And the store is also full.

**BANA:** Oh good! Have you dried it all yourself?

**MARTHA:** Yes, I dried all myself!

**BANA:** Good … I know I can always count on you. I see you even built platforms for drying the chips to keep away dust and farm animals as I advised you. All right, I have to go. I am rushing to Moon Hill village to look for Irish potatoes …

**MARTHA:** Irish potatoes? Why are you buying Irish potatoes?

**BANA:** Well, it’s something I want to give a try. A client of mine in the city connected me to a friend of his who runs a restaurant. He wants me to supply Irish potatoes.

**MARTHA:** Oh! God loves me! I was wondering where I would sell all my Irish potatoes!

**BANA:** You have? Well, I will come back and have a look at them. I still have to meet more farmers in Moon Hill … I need a lot of Irish potatoes.

**Scene 4**

**Location: Exterior. Kosia’s mill. Day**

**Background SFX: Hammering**

**Kosia, Zebra**

**ZEBRA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC, WEEPY, SNEEZING) Mr. Kosia, you won’t believe what just happened to me!

**KOSIA:** (CLOSE TO MIC) Are you crying, Zebra? What is the matter?

**ZEBRA:** Bana has chased me away.

**KOSIA:** What? Why?

**ZEBRA:** Because he is such a perfectionist and only an angel can please him.

**KOSIA:** (ASIDE, TO SELF) He might be a freaking perfectionist, but his flour is preferred by all those city traders.

**ZEBRA:** Can I work here, in your mill, Mr. Kosia?

**KOSIA:** As long as you steal all his customers and bring them to me!

**Scene 5**

**Location: Exterior. Martha’s garden. Day**

**Background SFX: Wild birds**

**Martha, Bana**

**BANA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC, AMAZED) Eh, eh, eh, eh! Martha, this is a good crop of Irish potatoes you have here!

**MARTHA:** (CLOSE TO MIC, LAUGHS) Thank you, Mr. Bana. I hope you give me a good price!

**BANA:** Well, that depends on the standards of your Irish potatoes!

**MARTHA:** Potatoes also have standards?

**BANA:** Yes. Everything has a standard, Martha! Remember the standards I taught you for cassava, cassava chips, starch and flour? Well, there are also standards for potatoes and potato products.

**MARTHA:** Really?

**BANA:** Yes. Consumers of potatoes also need to be protected. For example, Irish potatoes with green colouration are poor quality.

**MARTHA:** What? Why?

**BANA:** Because a tuber with a green coat shows that it has been exposed to the sun while growing! It will not be good for cooking or for making chips or starch. The customers will have wasted their money.

**MARTHA:** Interesting ...

**BANA:** Yes. Irish potatoes that are round, big and full, without scars, are of higher quality than those that are crooked, small, with scars, diseased, cut during harvest … all those are signs of poor quality! Potatoes must also be harvested in safe and hygienic containers so they do not make consumers ill or spread diseases.

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHS) But Mr. Bana! Are you saying a big potato is more delicious than a small one?

**BANA:** It’s not about that, Martha! For example, bigger potatoes make bigger French fries, and the bigger the French fries, the more delicious-looking, and the better the price. (LAUGHS) See how you are looking at me! But I am very serious about this new venture of mine because it promises to be lucrative. If all goes well, I will start to package my stuff … In fact, I bought the bags from the city and branded them.

**MARTHA:** And what’s the name of the products?

**BANA:** Mr. Bana’s Mill!!

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHS) Wow! What a nice name!

**BANA:** It is, and I want it to be known for good quality! My contact information is on the bag so the consumer can find me if they have a concern! When I come back in two weeks for the potatoes, I will teach you some more about potato standards.

**MARTHA:** Standards, standards, standards. “Standards” is the one word that never leaves your mouth … that is why you will get richer and richer, Mr. Bana!

**BANA:** I take that as a blessing, Madam Martha!

**MARTHA:** It is! I still can’t stop thanking God that you are the one to buy my Irish potatoes!

**Scene 6**

**Location: Interior. Kosia’s. Day**

**Background SFX: Mill**

**Kosia, Zebra**

**KOSIA:** (CLOSE TO MIC, SCREAMING) You lazy, stupid fool, Zebra! Come here at once!

**ZEBRA:** (AWAY FROM MIC, PROJECTING VOICE) Sir, I am still eating!

**KOSIA:** I said come here at once! I don’t pay you a day’s wage for eating!

**ZEBRA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC) Well, sir, here I come! I am not prepared to get only half my day’s wage just because I took time off to have lunch!

**KOSIA:** Shut the hell up! I am an ex-military man! In the army, you can spend two days standing watch without even scratching yourself! You can eat one biscuit and spend a whole week fighting! A man is a supposed to be strong!

**ZEBRA:** What do you need, sir?

**KOSIA:** I need us to sort out this motor as soon as possible! We have sacks and sacks of cassava to grind!

**ZEBRA:** Sir, I told you, we can no longer repair this motor on our own! We need help!

**KOSIA:** We shall seek help after grinding all that waiting cassava! Now, give me a hand! Let’s press this side with this stick and start the machine. Here, hold this!

**ZEBRA:** Sir, I can’t hold it alone!

**KOSIA:** Well, if we are both holding it, who will start the machine and pour the cassava in?

**ZEBRA:** But it’s risky, sir. The belt could snap and remove my eye!

**KOSIA:** Just close your eyes! I am starting the machine now!

**SFX:** MILL MOTOR STARTS

**KOSIA:** (SPEAKING VERY LOUDLY BECAUSE OF THE MOTOR SOUND) See, it’s working fine! (ABRUPTLY SCREAMS LOUDLY) Ooooooooooh! My nose!

**SFX:** THE MOTOR SHUTS OFF

**KOSIA:** (TALKS WITH NOSE HELD SHUT) Oh, my nose, my nose! Bring me a handkerchief! Or a towel! So much blood! Ooooh!

**ZEBRA:** Mr. Kosia, I quit! That could have been me! Goodbye!

***LATER THAT DAY***

**Scene 7**

**Location: Exterior. Kosia’s mill. Day**

**Background SFX: Bicycle, bodabodas**

**Kosia, Bana**

**BANA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC) Mr. Kosia, you called for me. What is the matter?

**KOSIA:** (CLOSE TO MIC, TALKING WITH HIS NOSE SWOLLEN SHUT) Mr. Pana, tank you po comic.

**BANA:** (NOW CLOSE TO MIC, ALARMED) Mr. Kosia, what happened to your nose?

**KOSIA:** It was a small accitent! Listen, I neet you to puy my cassapa …

**BANA:** (CHUCKLES) What kind of cassava, Mr. Kosia?

**KOSIA:** Try (dry) cassapa … It is all here! Look!

**BANA:** Why can’t you grind it yourself, as usual?

**KOSIA:** Pecause my machine is now totally teat (dead), as you can see!

**BANA:** But, Mr. Kosia, I can’t buy this cassava!

**KOSIA:** Why not?

**BANA:** It’s way below standards. Some of it has mould, much of it is dirty … I am sorry, my clients expect better from me. Find another buyer!

**KOSIA:** Come on, you pastart! Where are you coinc? I will sell to you at a cood price!

**Scene 8**

**Location: Exterior. Martha’s farm. Day**

**Background SFX:**

**Bana, Martha, Zebra**

**BANA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC) Ladies, very good work! This is great! Did you start harvesting at 4 a.m.?

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHS) You are welcome, Mr. Bana! No, as you can see, we are many. We started at 7!

**BANA:** Good! Here are the bags! All clean and new. Please make sure you sort by size. The big ones have to be separated from the small ones! The yellow variety has to be put in separate sacks from the white ones …

**MARTHA:** (CALLING OUT) Ladies, you heard it from him! Separate the big ones and pack them separately from the small ones! And the yellow variety from the white! Come get the bags!

**BANA:** I can see someone has been cutting some tubers; don’t pack those at all! Even the bruised ones, don’t pack!

**MARTHA:** Where will I put all the bruised and cut Irish potatoes, Mr. Bana? Have mercy on me.

**BANA:** I only pay for whole Irish potatoes!

**MARTHA:** Come on! My son is going to university! Can’t you mix in a few cut ones with the good ones?

**BANA:** I can’t! Cut and bruised Irish potatoes rot easily and they affect the good ones! By the time they reach my customers, most of them could be rotten.

**MARTHA:** I understand that. But then how do you explain separating big ones from the small ones?

**BANA:** Because bigger ones are higher value than the small ones, like I told you earlier! I will pay you a higher price for the bigger ones!

**MARTHA:** And separating the varieties?

**BANA:** Some customers want the yellow one, while others will want the white one! I am trying to make it easy for them. That is why I have branded the bags!

**MARTHA:** Wow! (CALLING OUT TO THE LADIES) Okay, ladies; let’s get to work! You heard Mr. Bana!

**FADE OUT**

**PAUSE**

**FADE IN**

**SFX:** THE REVERSE GEAR BEEP-TONE OF A TRUCK, THEN REVVING TRUCK ENGINE

**BANA:** (CALLING OUT LOUDLY) Pilot, that will do! Now you boys can start loading the sacks on the lorry!

**MARTHA:** Thank you for giving me a good price, Mr. Bana! So this truck is going to the city?

**BANA:** We travel tonight!

**MARTHA:** You are going back again?

**BANA:** My wife needs me, Martha. I have to be by her side!

**MARTHA:** What about Zebra?

**BANA:** I fired him! He is a sloppy young man!

**MARTHA:** But you need him!

**BANA:** I am thinking that I should leave it with you, Martha!

**MARTHA:** The processing centre?

**BANA:** Yes.

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHS) I would lose all my fingers trying to run the machines.

**ZEBRA:** (MOVING TOWARDS MIC) Mr. Bana, can I please talk to you?

**BANA:** Zebra, I am busy! Go away.

**ZEBRA:** Please, sir. Listen to me … I beg you, sir, in the name of God!

**BANA:** Stop kneeling! What do you want?

**ZEBRA:** Give me my job back, please. In the name of God!

**ALL:** SILENCE

**ZEBRA:** Please!

**MARTHA:** Mr. Bana, forgive him! He will change!

**BANA:** You are lucky I have no one else for the centre! All right, you have your job back!

**ZEBRA:** Thank, you, sir! Thank you so much!

**BANA:** But on condition that you report to a new manager – Martha.

**MARTHA:** (LAUGHS) What is this?

**BANA:** Martha, please help me and manage the centre for me in my absence! I don’t want to lose my customers!

**MARTHA:** Considering the circumstances, I will help you. At least weeding is still a long way off.

**BANA:** Thank you!

**MARTHA:** (JOKES) Don’t thank me … Maybe after learning the trade I will buy my own machine and dethrone you, Bana, as the best miller in the region.

**BOTH:** LAUGH

**BANA:** Thank you accepting to help me, Martha. After loading the truck, I want us to go to the processing centre so I can take you through the guidelines and procedures for the flour to get the quality mark.

**MARTHA:** The “quality” mark? What is that?

**BANA:** It’s a stamp that the Bureau of Standards gives to goods that have been certified as very good quality. It’s so customers can recognize good quality products from bad ones. You know we have rotten traders. People like Kosia…

**MARTHA:** LAUGHS

**BANA:** People who will sell dirty flour, even expired flour, just to make money. So the Bureau of Standards officer travels around from time to time to ensure that the quality has been maintained.

**MARTHA:** So is that why you want me to manage your centre in your absence?

**BANA:** Do you know how fortunate I am that they didn’t pass by when the centre was looking so bad!!!

**MARTHA:** I see.

**BANA:** Martha, good quality equals more income, on top of safe and satisfied customers.

**NARRATOR:** This program has been produced by the *Enhancing adoption of Harmonized Standards for Roots and Tubers in East and Central Africa* project whose goal is to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through commercialization and increased regional trade of roots and tubers in East and Central Africa.

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The project partners are the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture or IITA, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards, the Rwanda Bureau of Standards, the Tanzania Bureau of Standards and the University of Nairobi.

For more information on harmonized standards for roots and tubers, please contact the Bureau of Standards in your country.

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