

## Testing Brazilian cassava cultivars for FEC production and transformation capacity

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The economic importance of cassava in Northeast Brazil is based on its use for human consumption. Its importance also depends on its characteristics as a substitute for corn and wheat flour in poultry and baking industry. Genetic transformation is a reality for cassava and promises to speed up the improvement of the crop. However, the transformation technology is limited to few cultivars, due to genotype differences. It is then imperative to select cultivars from Northeast Brazil that are more suitable for genetic transformation, by testing their regeneration capacity *in vitro* after transformation. To accomplish this objective, CBN funded a small project to bring transformable tissues, mostly somatic embryos, from eight farmer-preferred cultivars from Brazil (Água Morna-BGM365, Amansa Burro-BGM549, Aparecida-BGM123, Bujá Preta-BGM1467, Milagrosa-BGM004, Rosa-BGM260, Rosinha-BGM394 e Tapicina-BGM1063), and test them in CIAT for transformation with the best *Agrobacterium*-plasmid combinations available in the latter. Some embryogenic tissues were also induced to produce Friable Embryogenic Callus (FEC), the most commonly used cell system to transfer genes into cassava. Preliminary results showed that one cultivar produced FEC, and few plants have been regenerated from somatic embryos subject to infection with *Agrobacterium*. Molecular confirmation of transformation is awaited.