

# BanaBag – Removing Plastics in Banana Farming // Spain

To produce high quality bananas for the market, they must be 'bagged' during growth – a cover is placed over the ripening bananas.

This protects them from insects and from damage caused by friction within the bunch, or the plant's leaves hitting the fruit. The bags also create an ideal microclimate in which the bananas ripen faster and become better quality. Typically, these bags are made from plastic.

A producer of organic bananas for the European market wanted to take its sustainable farming one step further and remove all plastic from the farming process. It looked for a solution that would deliver the same or better results, and not cause more plastic waste.

SK Sangüesa was able to offer a solution, and the BanaBag® was created. This is a paper tube that can be pulled over the banana bunches and cut where needed. It also has paper spacers which are used between hands of bananas within a bunch to protect friction between banana fruits.

"The BanaBag® brings multiple benefits. Using a special kraft paper, the product is suitable for a wet environment and a smooth side surface avoids friction. Paper creates natural insulation, protecting the fruit from extreme temperatures or overheating at the top of the bunch," says Iñaki Urdaci, the Market Insight Manager at SK Sangüesa. The solution is FSC certified and biodegradable, and can be composted with other compostable material at the farms. The paper solution is also fully food safe.

BanaBag® was tested for a year on Colombian banana farms totalling 140 hectares. During this time, the product proved to be an excellent substitution for plastic bagging and may have played a part in higher production with better quality of banana produce. "The test also helped to remove over 43 tonnes of plastic equalling an area of 192 football fields," Iñaki says. He continues "is there a better way to demonstrate what we can do with paper?"

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**Plastic removed in 1 year (tonnes)**

+43

