The Brazilian government's Executive Commission for Cacao Farm Planning  (Ceplac) is set to officially launch a biofungicide that targets witch's broom, a disease that devastated crops in the state of Bahia during the 1990s.

The disease is caused by the fungus *Moniliophthora perniciosa*, which germinates via water and tends to spread during rain seasons, currently exists in Brazil, Panama and parts of the Caribbean.

On June 16, Ceplac will present the treatment Tricovab, developed by fermenting the a fungus called *Trichoderma stromaticum* which is antagonistic to *Moniliophthora perniciosa*.

"The fungus is colonized in grains of rice. When in contact with water that will be used for application, the fungus is 'activated' and, in plants, becomes the natural enemy of *Moniliophthora perniciosa*," Cepec Cacao Research Center head Adonias de Castro said in a release.

The commission plans to distribute 10,240kg (22,575lbs) to growers who adapt to the recommended technological package. It is expected that 640 properties of 2ha each in size will take on the biofungicide, across 30 municipalities.

"Ceplac gives society an effective response to the issue of plant health, but more than that an environmentally friendly product provides an effective gain for farming and the environment," Ceplac Bahia superintendent Juvenal Maynart said.

"It opens the possibility of increasing grower income with the highest possible productivity. All this will create more jobs in the field. With these factors assured, we will ensure the sustainability of cacao agribusiness."

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