



2008 AWARD Fellow
Professor Waceke Wanjohi

Position:	Chair
Institution:	Agricultural Science and Technology Department School of Agriculture and Enterprise Development Kenyatta University, Nairobi
Country:	Kenya
PhD:	Plant Pathology, Kenyatta University, 1999
Mentored by:	Dr. Richard Jones, Assistant director Eastern and Southern Africa, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics

Professor Waceke Wanjohi is a nematologist, a specialist in controlling plant nematode pests the minute underground worms that can devastate crops.

Wanjohi's current research is focused on improving crop yields in smallholder farming systems by effectively managing crop pests and pathogens, such as biocontrol of root-knot nematodes, by using indigenous fungi. She is co-founder of the Nematology Initiative of East and Southern Africa, a fast-growing regional network funded by the Gatsby Charitable Trust. Its primary aim is to build capacity in plant nematology at all levels, create awareness about the importance of nematodes, conduct collaborative research, and provide peer support. In 1996, Wanjohi also co-founded the Kenya Society of Microbiology, a professional organization of scientists in microbiology, medicine, biotechnology, food science, agriculture, and the environment. She served as chair from 2007-2009.

Wanjohi is chair of the Agricultural Science and Technology Department in the School of Agriculture and Enterprise Development at Kenyatta University. She took on this role after successfully establishing the university's Regional Center for Capacity Development, serving as its first director. She was recently promoted from senior lecturer to associate professor.

A senior Fulbright Research Fellow, Wanjohi is also one of 115 distinguished Kenyan scholars admitted to the Kenya National Academy of Sciences in May 2007. Members are elected from among citizens of high certain academic standing.

Wanjohi is an invited reviewer, referee, and author for several international journals, and she co-founded the *Journal of Tropical Microbiology and Biotechnology* in 2002.

As an AWARD Fellow, Wanjohi says she is learning much about mentoring. "The AWARD mentoring orientation workshop injected new life into my career. The facilitators identified and pointed out positive aspects about me that completely changed the way I perceived myself. I am able to confidently apply the mentoring skills I have acquired to mentor other junior women scientists, my students, and staff in the department."

Increased networking opportunities and professional collaboration have also boosted her career. “I know help from the fellows, my mentor, and the AWARD staff is a call or an email away,” says Wanjohi. I have access to one big and great family; one with the same agenda, motive, and commitment to transform rural livelihoods.”

Wanjohi was also recently elected as a fellow in the prestigious, London-based Society of Biology, an international organization with 80,000 members worldwide.

Professor Waceke Wanjohi speaking to pupils from five schools in Nakuru District, Kenya during a community role-modeling event



Wanjohi is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, please visit www.awardfellowships.org
