

Notes from the Board

The Panama TR4 Program Management Board (Board) convened a focus group of Innisfail-based growers as part of their commitment to grower engagement. Outcomes of the meeting will be published in the August 2021 edition of the Panama TR4 Update.

An Epidemiological Review (Review) which was commissioned by the Board earlier this year is in its final stages. The authors presented key recommendations to the Board and infested property growers who were consulted with as part of the investigation. The Board is carefully considering all of the Review's recommendations and will produce a response that will be published alongside the Review. All stakeholders will be notified when the report and recommendations are available.

Transition to industry update

Identifying a framework that will manage the disease spread while being grower-centric, scalable, and flexible is critical to industry-led management. The Transition to Industry Working Group convened a panel of subject matter experts to commence the development of such a framework, revealing some key legislative tools which will progress to further development. Growers will be invited to take part in the next steps.

Technical Working Group update

Confirming a plant to be positive for Panama TR4 at polymerase chain reaction (PCR) could save time in the diagnostic process, and be critical in early detection and future containment of the disease. The Technical Working Group has developed a risk-based matrix to guide future destruction of plants based on PCR results as opposed to VCG (vegetative compatibility group). The Board is considering this approach, and where it might be applied.

Q4 Program Report highlights

The Board was presented a Quarterly Report that demonstrates the Program achieved its financial year targets and operated at a surplus. Here are some highlights of the Q4 Program Report (Apr to Jun 2021).

Operations

- Surveillance of all at-risk properties was completed for the 2020/2021 period.
- Compliance verification activities including 34 audits, 3 education activities, 3 risk item inspections prior to movement, 6 fruit inspections, the supervision of 5 destruction zones and activities for 5 sample consignments for agronomic purposes under a biosecurity instrument permit.

Communications & engagement

- Produced 5 Facebook posts, 2 ABGC E-bulletins, 1 new factsheet and commenced the review of 4 existing factsheets within the Grower Kit.

Diagnostic services

- 92 samples were tested with 35 positive to Panama TR4 (10 are still under investigation). All positive samples were taken from infested properties.

Policy and planning

- 6 requests for policy advice to support the operational needs of the Program were finalised.
- 1 new area of legal policy requiring investigation was identified and finalised.
- 7 new program documents were approved and 17 existing documents were reviewed and approved.

Next
meeting
Oct
2021

General enquiries about this notice: Call Rhiannon Evans, Program Leader on 07 4091 8141 or Sonia Campbell, ABGC on 0428 038 330

Grower enquiries to the Board: Call Jim Pekin on (07) 3278 4786

The Panama TR4 Program is a joint initiative between the Queensland Government and the Australian Banana Growers' Council.

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disease
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