

Notes from the Board

The Panama TR4 Program Management Board (Board) published the [2021 Panama TR4 Epidemiological Review](#) (Review) in September. From the Review's recommendations, the Board has approved underspent funds from the Panama TR4 Program (Program) to start research which is considered high-priority. These projects include electronic nose technology to detect the disease in asymptomatic plants, and changes to the destruction protocol. A contribution has also been made towards the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' research on infected DNA from the Northern Territory and Tully Valley to see if it's possible to understand the source of Panama TR4 on infested properties through Elongation Factor Sequencing.

Transition to industry update

The Transition to Industry Working Group is considering the development of an industry Code of Practice (CoP). The Board has agreed in principle to fund ABGC to engage a specialist consultant to draft the CoP. The Industry Transition Leader will collaborate with growers, government and other relevant stakeholders about the CoP's content.

Technical Working Group update

The 2021 Panama TR4 Epidemiological Review made recommendations around destruction protocols that the Technical Working Group (TWG) will investigate. The TWG is also reviewing the Panama TR4 Response Strategy, and investigating alternative surveillance options which are suitable for the reduced industry budget post June 2023.

Q1 Program Report highlights

The Board was presented the Quarterly Report which was well received with no major concerns in reference to the Program's Operational Plan. The Program is operating within budget and is looking to divert unspent funds to support research that will offer industry the latest scientific information to effectively manage the disease. Here are some highlights of the Q1 Program Report (Jul to Sep 2021).

Operations

- Surveillance has been performed for the quarter according to the Tracing and Surveillance Strategy.
- 31 compliance verification activities on infested properties were conducted.
- 6 movements under a Biosecurity Instrument Permit were undertaken.
- 12 movement activities were advised with 2 being supervised.

Diagnostic services

- 25 samples were tested with 8 positive for Panama TR4 (5 are still under investigation). All positive samples were taken from infested properties.

Communications & engagement

- Communications included social media with Biosecurity Queensland and ABGC, and the public release of the Epidemiological Review.
- Engagements included information stalls at 2 community events, 2 service provider visits and a routine check-in with 1 high-risk property.

Policy and planning

- 3 requests for strategic and operational policy to support the Program were finalised.
- 5 high priority and 2 low priority research projects for control and containment of Panama TR4 are being actioned from the Review.
- The Policy team continues to provide support for the transition to industry management.

Next
meeting
Dec
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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