

Notes from the Board

For long-term disease management, the Queensland Government and Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) are committed to continuing containment policies for Panama disease tropical race 4 (Panama TR4). The ABGC's '*Code of Practice for the management and control of Panama disease tropical race 4 on an infested property in Queensland*' will be adopted by the Queensland Government, and will replace the regulatory notice that currently applies to Panama TR4 infested properties.

For growers this means all properties with the disease will continue to be regulated under the Queensland *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Each infested property will be declared a restricted place, and commercial banana farms will follow the requirements of the Code. All other commercial banana farms (i.e. those without Panama TR4) will be guided by the Banana Industry Biosecurity Guideline. The guideline outlines how growers can best meet their general biosecurity obligation (GBO) and minimise the risk of disease spread. More information about these changes will be provided in the next Panama TR4 Update.

In response to the latest detection of Panama TR4 in the Tully Valley in May, the Board would like to remind growers about the importance of maintaining on-farm biosecurity measures and reporting suspect plants to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. With the risk of disease spread continuing to escalate in the Tully Valley, it's a timely reminder that Panama TR4 is here to stay and all growers should be protecting their farms at the front gate.

Panama TR4 research update – Under the plastic

Dr Tony Pattison presented a research update to the Program Leader on the suppression of Panama TR4 and role of soil microbiome. The update will be circulated to the Board for their endorsement.

In mid May, the highly anticipated Australian Banana Industry Congress was held in Cairns. The event saw numerous presentations about Panama TR4 including a panel session involving three growers of infested properties. The Board acknowledged the growers' honest account of what it's like to live with the disease and will take their suggestions into consideration for future disease management.

May's Board meeting welcomed Dr Rachel Chay, Chair of the Board and Deputy Director General and Chief Biosecurity Officer (DAF) and Susan Porchun, General Manager and Chief Plant Health Manager, Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity (DAF) into their roles. Rachel and Susan replace Malcolm Letts and Mike Ashton respectively.

The Panama TR4 Program Management Board first convened in April 2020 to formalise the joint industry and government partnership that has successfully governed the Panama TR4 biosecurity response in Far North Queensland since 2015. The next Board meeting on 26 June 2023 will mark the final scheduled meeting during government leadership of disease management. The motivation and enthusiasm shared between the parties to achieve a highly effective disease management program for industry continues to grow, as the end of transition becomes nearer.

**Next
meeting
26 June
2023**

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 Leanne Erakovic on (07) 3278 4786

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

**Panama
disease
tropical
race 4**

