

TR4 CONTROL PROGRAM

Protecting Australian bananas, together



Panama TR4 support and services

Panama disease tropical race 4 (Panama TR4) is a devastating soil-borne fungal disease that affects bananas. It has been detected on properties in the Tully Valley and the disease is expected to spread.

Under Queensland's *Biosecurity Act 2014*, Panama TR4 is categorised as restricted matter and legal obligations are in place to reduce the risk of its spread. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility and there is information and advice available to support commercial banana growers and other industry stakeholders to assist with understanding how to protect our banana farms and local community from Panama TR4.

Banana growers

1 Panama TR4 information and resources

There are great resources to support growers to understand what Panama TR4 is and how they can protect their farms from the disease. All growers have been issued a copy of the comprehensive resource, the 'Panama TR4 Grower Kit', and further copies are available by contacting the Australian Banana Growers' Council's (ABGC) TR4 Control Program on 0418 644 068 or email info@abgc.org.au. Alternatively, the most up-to-date Grower Kit resources are available on the [PanamaTR4Protect \(panamatr4protect.com.au\)](http://PanamaTR4Protect.com.au) website.

There is an extensive amount of information and resources on the [PanamaTR4Protect](http://PanamaTR4Protect.com.au) website for growers, service providers, farm workers and community members. There are videos, biosecurity signs, posters, and a vast array of information on Panama TR4 and how to protect farms from the disease.

2 Get started with your on-farm biosecurity and be ready for a detection of Panama TR4

The National Banana Development and Extension team (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, DAF) provides growers with support in the following areas:

- how to get started with your on-farm biosecurity
- assistance with your biosecurity plan
- how to be ready for a detection of Panama TR4.

To arrange a farm visit to discuss on-farm biosecurity contact Tegan Kukulies on 07 4220 4152 or email betterbananas@daf.qld.gov.au.

3 Managing Panama TR4 into the future

The management of Panama TR4 is in final stages of transitioning from government to industry leadership. Geoff Wilson has been appointed the ABGC's TR4 Program Manager. His previous position since March 2021 as Industry Transition Leader, has provided him with knowledge and experience in disease management and risk mitigation strategies. Geoff will lead the team and deliver the TR4 Control Program from 1 July 2023. Growers can contact Geoff about the TR4 Control Program on 0418 644 068 or email info@abgc.org.au.

To ensure you are kept up to date with the latest news and updates on ABGC's TR4 Control Program, sign up to receive the e-bulletin by visiting the ABGC website (scroll to the bottom of the homepage) or email info@abgc.org.au.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to support industry beyond 1 July 2023 through compliance, ongoing extension activities, research into soil health, and research into Panama TR4 resistant varieties. Continued diagnostic services on a fee for service basis will also be available.

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4 Research and development into Panama TR4

Australian research into Panama TR4 has focused on various aspects of the disease and its management including disinfectants, inoculum levels and alternative host species. Research is currently focused on new banana varieties and soil health. To learn more about research into Panama TR4 call the Banana Production Systems (DAF) Team Leader, Stewart Lindsay on 07 4220 4120 or email Stewart.Lindsay@daf.qld.gov.au or visit the betterbananas.com.au website.

5 Financial Assistance

Sustainability loans for primary producers are available through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). These loans are targeted at investment in infrastructure to create a viable future for farming enterprises. Applicable activities include those that improve farming system sustainability, natural resource sustainability and financial sustainability. Investing in biosecurity and Panama TR4 preparedness activities comply with these loan parameters. For further information go to [Sustainability Loan | Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority \(qrda.qld.gov.au/program/sustainability-loan\)](http://Sustainability Loan | Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (qrda.qld.gov.au/program/sustainability-loan)).

6 Feral pig control

Feral pigs are one of the many potential vectors of spread of Panama TR4. They can cause substantial crop damage to banana (and cane) farms in Far North Queensland and have devastating environmental impacts.

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC) have feral pig traps available for loan to landowners. Conditions apply. Supplies of 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) baits are also available for landholders to access once criteria have been met. To obtain 1080 bait for feral pig control, contact CCRC on 1300 763 903 or search 'feral pigs' on their website, cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au. Alternatively, contact your local agricultural supplier for registered products that are approved for use for feral pig control.

Service providers to the banana industry

Many different service providers visit banana farms throughout Far North Queensland to conduct their work. In some cases, their day-to-day operations have significantly changed since Panama TR4 was first detected in the Tully Valley in 2015.

1 Biosecurity information on how to protect your business and banana farms

The PanamaTR4Protect website is a one-stop shop for everything Panama TR4 related. For service providers there are videos, factsheets and a learning module that provides practical advice about how to protect the banana industry and your business from Panama TR4.

2 Biosecurity toolkit for when facilities are not available

A biosecurity toolkit contains the necessary equipment to come clean and leave clean when accessing an agricultural property. Carrying a biosecurity toolkit provides the opportunity to clean-down footwear and /or equipment when facilities are not available. An example biosecurity toolkit can be found at [daf.qld.gov.au /bio-toolkit-checklist](http://daf.qld.gov.au/bio-toolkit-checklist)