

Panama disease tropical race 4

Surveillance for Panama TR4

Panama TR4 is one of the greatest threats to worldwide banana production. In some countries, it's had a devastating impact on industries and livelihoods. If the disease is not managed, it has the potential to do the same in Far North Queensland.

Why is surveillance important?

Panama disease tropical race 4 (Panama TR4) is a soil-borne fungal disease that kills banana plants.

Early detection, rapid destruction, and on-farm restrictions are the only way to control and contain the disease. This is why surveillance remains a key priority of the Panama TR4 response.

Biosecurity Queensland's Surveillance Program

The Panama TR4 Program has been undertaking surveillance since the disease was first detected in Far North Queensland in 2015.

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, the Program is authorised by the Director-General to:

- determine the presence and extent of Panama disease tropical race 4 within Queensland
- monitor compliance with the Act.

Biosecurity officers can enter properties to undertake activities which include, but are not limited to:

- inspect and examine banana plants for signs of disease
- collect a sample, or samples, from a banana plant for examination
- take photos and document information when collecting data and samples
- remain at the property for the time required to undertake activities.

DID YOU KNOW?



Whilst all attempts will be made to contact you, Biosecurity officers may need to access your property without your approval or without you being there – they are authorised under the law to do this.

For more information visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au or call **13 25 23**



What to expect

The Program will call to arrange a mutually suitable time to conduct surveillance on your farm. They will tell you why they are attending, what they will do, and ask a few questions including who to meet with on the day, and any reasonable biosecurity measures that you would like followed.

On arrival The surveillance team leader will contact you to request permission to enter your farm. They will tell you why they are attending and what they will do. They will ask you if you have any safe and reasonable biosecurity measures that you would like the team to observe. This will be formally noted in the 'Consent for Entry' form.

Consent for Entry form The team leader will ask you to sign the 'Consent for Entry' form. You will be given a copy for your records.

Looking for Panama TR4 The surveillance officers may walk every 4th row of your entire banana production area looking for banana plants with external signs that could indicate the presence of Panama TR4.

If signs are detected If a plant with external signs consistent with the Panama TR4 is found, surveillance officers will flag the plant for further investigation, and notify you. The plant will be cut to look for internal signs of the disease. Samples of the plant will be taken for laboratory testing for the presence of the Panama TR4 fungus: *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense*.



If you see any signs of disease

Contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 immediately. As Panama disease tropical race 4 is a Category 1 restricted matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, it is a legal requirement to report it within 24 hours. Do not cut or remove the plant as cutting will trigger the fungus to release spores. As well, it might make it hard to get a suitable sample for diagnostic testing.

Biosecurity best practice

Biosecurity Queensland's officers are fully trained and committed to best practice. The surveillance team undertakes rigorous cleaning and decontamination processes to ensure they do not spread any diseases. They will adhere to all reasonable on-farm biosecurity measures.

Checking your own plants for Panama TR4

Growers are encouraged to undertake their own surveillance in addition to the surveillance by the Panama TR4 Program – It is wise to be #PanamaTR4ready.

- **Learn** about the disease. Read your *Panama TR4 Growers Kit*, visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23 for more information.
- **Educate** your field staff on the signs of the disease using *Panama TR4 Grower Disease Identification Guide*. Emphasise the importance of reporting suspect plants immediately.
- **Use** the *Check your Plants* factsheet as a guide to conduct your own surveillance.



Your plant samples

All plant samples taken from your farm will be clearly labelled and securely packaged. They will be sent to a specialised laboratory in Brisbane with a full, secure chain of custody. Testing may take up to 6 weeks and the Panama TR4 Program will notify you of the results.

Read the *Diagnosing Panama TR4* factsheet on biosecurity.qld.gov.au for more information.

More information and support

Biosecurity Queensland's Panama TR4 Program is working closely with growers, industry and the community to slow the spread of the disease. We can provide a range of information on the disease, decontamination processes, surveillance and management of Panama TR4. Call 13 25 23 or email panamatr4@daf.qld.gov.au