



MEDIA RELEASE

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BANANA INDUSTRY ON ALERT AFTER SUSPECTED CASE OF TR4 IN TULLY

The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) is working with biosecurity authorities after a suspected case of the soil-borne disease Panama Tropical Race 4 (TR4) was detected on one banana plantation in the Tully area.

Biosecurity Queensland is quarantining the farm following an initial positive test result received overnight from Queensland Government labs. Further testing is being conducted which is expected to conclusively determine whether TR4 is confirmed. Those test results are expected to be available in one to two weeks.

ABGC Chairman Doug Phillips said ABGC was working with Biosecurity Queensland on the issue and has advised all banana growers to immediately review their on-farm biosecurity practices.

"Biosecurity is the most important issue to the Australian banana industry and Panama TR4 is the most serious of all biosecurity risks for us.

"This suspected case has been identified through the banana industry's ongoing communication with growers about biosecurity risks and our surveillance work, with the plant sample collected by one of our field officers after being notified by the grower of an unhealthy plant.

"Although this is a suspected case of Panama TR4 both ABGC and Biosecurity Queensland are treating this case with the utmost seriousness.

"ABGC will continue to keep growers informed about this situation."

Growers have been reminded to continue biosecurity practices such as ensuring the use of clean planting material, not sharing farm machinery and equipment with other growers and removing all plant material and soil from any machinery, equipment, vehicles and footwear before they are brought onto their farms.

Panama TR4 is a soil-borne fungal disease found in many of the world's major banana growing areas. It attacks the vascular systems of banana plants, including Australia's major banana variety Cavendish. It does not affect banana fruit and there are no health risks from handling or eating bananas. If the sample is confirmed as TR4, it will be the first time the disease has been found in Queensland. The disease is present in the Northern Territory where it was first found in 1997.

Updates will be provided on the ABGC website www.abgc.org.au and Facebook page.

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