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October 21, 2016

Tully settlement to proceed following negative test results

The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) will proceed with the settlement of the TR4 infested farm at Tully, following confirmation a suspect plant from another Queensland property does not contain Panama Tropical race 4.

The planned buyout of the TR4 farm, owned by the Robson family, was temporarily suspended late last month after the suspect plant was reported to Biosecurity Queensland (BQ).

For the past three weeks, extensive diagnostic testing was conducted on samples of the plant to eliminate any possibility of it containing TR4.

ABGC Chairman Doug Phillips praised the Robson family and the owners of the other tested property for their patience during what he described as a "difficult and stressful time" for all involved.

"The timing of the discovery of the suspect plant could not have come at a worse time as settlement of the purchase of the TR4 farm was due to proceed within days," Mr Phillips said.

"However, we always remained hopeful that the test results would return negative and the settlement of the Robson's farm would proceed," he said.

"I understand it has been a very difficult time for not only the Robson's but for the owners of the other property who reported the suspect plant and I would sincerely like to thank them all for their patience during the past three weeks."

The Commonwealth Government's loan of \$3.3 million towards the purchase of the Tully farm was conditional on no other detections or suspect detections of TR4, before settlement was completed.

Mr Phillips said the ABGC now planned to proceed with the buyout of the property as soon as legally possible.

Once settlement has been reached, the ABGC will immediately close all operations at the farm and destroy all banana plants on the 340 acre site, as part of a comprehensive containment strategy.

A manager has been appointed to the farm, which will remain under strict quarantine to prevent any further TR4 spread off the property.

Mr Phillips urged all growers to continue to be biosecurity conscious on their farms and report any suspect plants if found.



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“The past 19 months has been a very difficult time for all growers and I’d like to thank all in the industry that have helped contain this disease so far,” Mr Phillips said.

“But, like I have said before, the fight against Panama TR4 is something we will be living with for a very long time and continued vigilance is essential to future containment,” he said.

For further comment contact:

North Queensland Communication’s Officer
Sonia Campbell

M: 0428 038 330 **E:** sonia@abgc.org.au