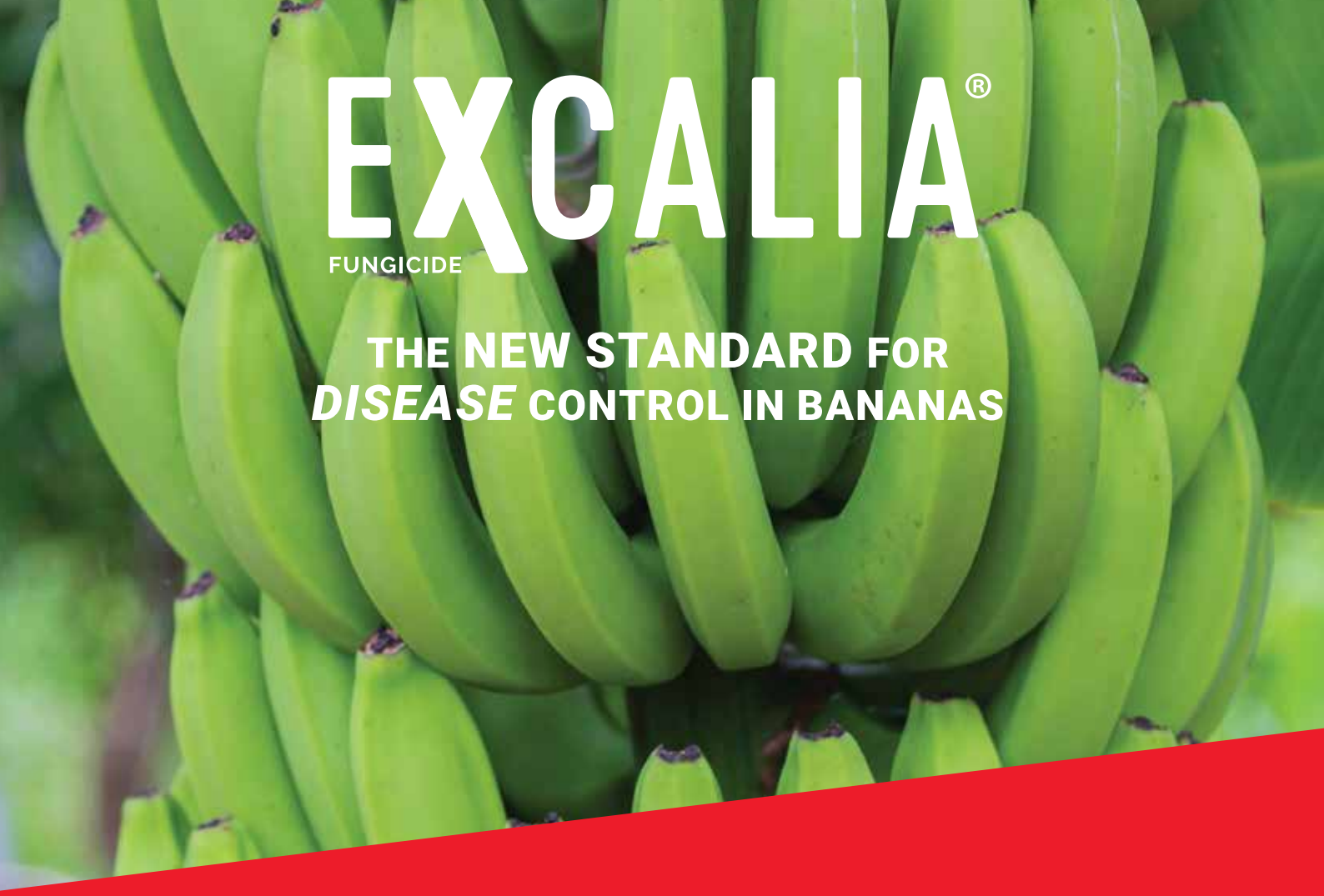
Australian Bananas

Australian Banana Growers

ISSUE 74 | AUGUST 2025

SINK YOUR TEETH INTO CONGRESS

Highlights from the Gold Coast



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Front page: Billy Collett (Australian Reptile Park) with Lakeland grower and Congress Chair Paul Inderbitzin.
Billy opened the 2025 event with some practical tips and– kept everyone on the edge of their seat! Refresh your snake bite first aid on page 9.

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A NOTE FROM THE CEO

Leanne Erakovic

Right now, there are some 540 banana farms in Australia. Most are family run – from small operations to larger enterprises, and everything in between. Production was valued at almost $700 million dollars in the financial year ending in June 2024.

In 2025 our industry is diverse and dynamic. It's geographically more spread out than ever before. We've got multi-generational farming families who bring their years of knowledge and passion to the picture, and we have new faces, too, bringing renewed energy. From the farm right through the supply chain, it's an exciting time to be in bananas.

At the 2025 Australian Banana Industry Congress, held in early August, I was again reminded that we are so privileged to have world-leaders left, right and centre - from those innovative growers producing top quality produce and our internationally recognised researchers, through to brilliant marketers, wholesalers, suppliers and logistics coordinators.

We all know that farming comes with highs and lows and at the Australian Banana Growers' Council, our advocacy team strives to support you through it all, by raising awareness, talking with key stakeholders and highlighting the need for swift support.

We are tackling workforce challenges head-on, advocating for real-world solutions that reflect the reality on the ground. We hear your concerns about audit fatigue. You want to deliver safe, high quality produce. But the duplication, cost and time involved is taking you further away from what you love most about farming.

We understand that access to chemicals is changing, and with that, the way you work.

We also know that strong biosecurity is non-negotiable. Because protecting your farms from threats, near and far, is essential to securing a strong and vibrant future here in Australia. We are always working behind the scenes to make sure your interests are represented and acted upon.

This work is only possible because of our grower and affiliate members – a sincere thank you, because without you, there is no ABGC. Your support and participation gives strength to our advocacy, direction to our projects, and a powerful voice to the banana industry.

I hope you enjoyed the VIP treatment at Congress and I'd encourage you to check out Page 10 to revisit some of the outcomes from the grower-only breakfast.

One of the things I have loved about Congress throughout my 10 years with this industry, is that it reminds us all of one important thing: while we all have our own interests to protect, so often our successes and challenges are shared. And those challenges are much easier to work through when we stand united.

It was a pleasure to catch up with so many of you on the Gold Coast and – at the time of writing – I'm looking forward to seeing some more of you in Coffs Harbour for the ABGC's quarterly board meeting.

The ABGC thanks its Affiliate Members for their support of our industry.

CHECKING IN WITH THE CHAIR

Leon Collins

By the time you're reading this, we'll be a few weeks post-Banana Congress and there's a chance I may have finally caught up on sleep. A slim chance, mind you.

What a great few days it was. It's always good to catch up with so many familiar faces, share a yarn, and hear from the huge range of speakers we had lined up. It reinforced to me that this is a young person's game and it was heartening to see so many of the next generation coming up through the ranks.

One of the real highlights was recognising this year's Award of Honour recipients and welcoming two new ABGC Life Members. A big congratulations to all the award winners – your contribution to our industry is outstanding. We're all better off for having people like you in bananas.

And of course, to Barry Lowe and the late Dennis Howe – our newest Life Members. I feel very fortunate that my time in bananas has overlapped with these two legends. Their dedication to our industry, and to ABGC, has been something pretty special. Dennis leaves behind an incredible legacy, and I know many of us will be inspired by the work he's done for years to come. And Barry – I owe you a beer to celebrate your Life Membership properly!

At ABGC, we don't take our members for granted. You're the reason we can keep doing what we do. On pages 10–11 you'll find an update from our membership and advocacy team, and if you'd like to know more, don't hesitate to reach out at members@abgc.org.au.

Congress is always a great chance to hear the latest R&D straight from the people doing the work – and I thank every presenter who gave their time and answered questions. Of course, that's not where it ends. In this edition of *Australian Bananas* you'll find promising work on banana bells (pp. 20–21), results from the first year of the nitrogen and phosphorus rate trial at South Johnstone (pp. 22–23), and much more.

Make sure you flick through to the end too, where you'll find the results and pictures from the Innisfail and Tully Shows.

ANNUAL BANANA VOLUMES

The national banana levy collected by the Federal Department of Agriculture is compulsory for commercial banana growers. It is 2.19 cents per kilogram of bananas sold.
The dollars collected show an estimate of production for the previous financial year. Right is a table of the levy-based banana volumes. For non-industry participants, please note this is an approximation of production, but not all bananas grown are sold, i.e. some don't make the retailer-required specifications. Also, there is a lag factor, in that levies paid on June sales (at least) are paid in the following financial year.
ⓘ Most commercial banana growers in Australia pay the banana levy – but there are some exceptions. Essentially, a producer of bananas (the person who owns the bananas immediately after harvest) is liable to pay the levy. A producer will NOT be liable for levies if, in a financial year, the total quantity of bananas sold by retail sale amounts to less than $100 of levy.
More detail on exemptions from paying the levy and other information can be found at agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/bananas

Years ending 30th June (in '000 tonnes):	
2014	371
2015	371
2016	393
2017	414
2018	388
2019	372
2020	382
2021	403
2022	375
2023	371
2024	369

BANANA LEVY RATE

The make-up and purpose of the various components of the Banana Industry Levy are as follows.

Levy Amount	Purpose
0.50c /kg	Plant Health Australia (PHA) levy: The Department sends the funds to PHA, for the ongoing containment and management of Panama Tropical Race 4 disease, and to conduct activities that aim to improve biosecurity within the banana industry.
1.69c /kg	Hort Innovation (HIA) levy. The Department sends the funds to HIA for R&D and Marketing: 0.54 c/Kg is for Banana R&D, which is matched dollar for dollar by the Department and 1.15 c/kg for Banana Marketing
	Total = 2.19c /kg* (32.85c per 15kg carton).

The Banana PHA levy currently funds the containment of the first TR4 infested farm that the industry purchased and the industry's part of the cost-sharing deed with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for TR4 containment. It also funds the pre-existing commitments – Torres Straight Exotic Fruit Flies Eradication Response, PHA membership/meetings and Government levy collection.
Further information: Leanne Erakovic, ceo@abgc.org.au Phone – 07 3278 4786.
More info on the levy rate: https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/levies/rates/bananas

DENNIS HOWE: A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

The Australian banana industry has posthumously honoured one of its great pioneers, with the late Dennis Howe awarded Life Membership of the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) at this year's Australian Banana Industry Congress. You can read more about this on page 17.

Dennis, who passed away in June, is widely credited with establishing banana production on the Atherton Tablelands. In 1995, he began growing bananas at Walkamin, despite many believing the region was unsuitable. His determination and success not only proved the sceptics wrong but inspired countless others to follow his lead, transforming the Tablelands into a key banana-growing region.

Dennis will be remembered not only for his achievements, but also for the qualities that defined him as a person. He was a respected and much-loved leader whose generosity, humility and optimism inspired those around him. With a strong work ethic and a determination to succeed, Dennis led by example, treating everyone as an equal while guiding others with vision and encouragement. His leadership and outlook have left a lasting mark on both the banana industry and the wider community.

DODGING BANANA DISEASES IS VALUE FOR MONEY

Professor Andre Drenth
(supplied by QAAFI)

ABGC's R&D Manager Dr Rosie Godwin

A Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation report has found a banana research program has the potential to save the industry more than $52.2 million.

The University of Queensland program aimed to strengthen the capacity of the banana industry to diagnose disease outbreaks.

Project lead Professor Andre Drenth said the program was cost effective and had a 12 to 1 benefit-cost ratio.

"The Australian banana industry is largely based on the Cavendish variety, so protecting it from exotic diseases benefits all growers," Professor Drenth said.

"A high return on investment does not happen by luck but depends on industry insights and careful project planning.

"By working with a resource economist, we determined the exclusion benefits, which are the financial benefits of not having these disease problems.

"We looked at the banana industry to determine what would make the biggest difference to their profitability and worked backwards from that.

"If we can keep the exotic plant diseases causing major and costly problems overseas out of Australia, we can achieve major impacts, so that's where we put our focus.

"Using data from outbreaks of Black Sigatoka and Moko disease in Cavendish plantations in Latin America, we developed an accurate picture of how much time, effort, and cost are involved to control them."

Professor Drenth said QAAFI's program was focused on developing and maintaining the capability to quickly detect and identify emerging plant pathogens while also strengthening Australia's preparedness for banana disease incursions.

Australian Banana Growers' Council R&D manager Dr Rosie Godwin said the industry was committed to reducing the potential for incursions of any pest or disease that could adversely affect production, trade, marketability, and the environment.

"Over many years we have backed investments that improve industry biosecurity preparedness," Dr Godwin said.

"One major focus was the development of new diagnostic tools for high priority pathogens because quick and accurate diagnosis affords the industry a much greater chance of eradication and effective management.

"This is extremely important to our industry because the cost would be enormous should any new disease become established here.

"In terms of long-term sustainability, the banana industry sees this research as providing great value for money."

Hort Innovation CEO Brett Fifield said the research highlighted the immense value of strategic investment in biosecurity preparedness for the banana industry.

"Our latest Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook revealed that banana growers produced more than 368 thousand tonnes of product in FY23/24," Mr Fifield said.

"With such high volumes being produced each year, this research underscores the importance of equipping growers with the tools to detect and respond to disease threats early.

"Hort Innovation is proud to support initiatives like this to ensure the long-term sustainability and profitability of the banana industry."

STOP THE BANANA SPLITS

Split banana peels can significantly reduce marketable yield, yet can be easily avoided via the application of calcium nitrate fertilisers throughout the crop growth cycle.

According to Yara Regional Sales Manager, Paul Crack, splitting is associated with low levels of calcium in plant tissue.

"Calcium is an important part of the cell wall structure and acts as a glue that binds the cell walls together," he says.

"Calcium uptake can be restricted during cold winters, rapid plant growth and competition from high rates of applied potassium.

"Inadequate calcium reduces the stability and integrity of plant cell walls, making fruit more prone to splitting, curling, bruising and breakdown."

Bananas need an adequate supply of calcium throughout the whole crop growth cycle.

"Plant uptake is maximised when applications are timed to coincide with new root growth," Paul says.

"Most uptake occurs before flowering and it is important that a soluble form of calcium is applied early in the growth cycle of both plant and ratoon crops.

"Water-soluble forms of calcium are most effective at providing plant-available calcium."

YaraLiva NITRABOR, YaraLiva TROPICOTE and YaraTera CALCINIT all contain 100% water-soluble calcium.

YaraLiva NITRABOR also contains boron, which plays an important role in maintaining good cell wall elasticity.

One trial demonstrated that a standard fertiliser program that included adding YaraLiva NITRABOR increased average fruit weight by 15% compared to a standard program that included ammonium sulphate.[1]

All three contain 15% nitrogen, mostly as nitrate.

"Nitrate nitrogen is readily available for plant uptake, is not subject to volatilisation losses and does not cause soil acidification," Paul says.

"When application rates are matched and timed to plant requirements, nitrogen use efficiency will be optimised and loss minimised."

For more information about nutrition programs to optimise marketable yields in banana crops, contact your local Yara representative or visit yara.com.au

About Yara

Yara grows knowledge to responsibly feed the world and protect the planet, to fulfil our vision of a collaborative society, a world without hunger and a planet respected. To meet these commitments, we have taken the lead in developing digital farming tools for precision farming and work closely with partners throughout the whole food value chain to develop more climate-friendly crop nutrition solutions. In addition, we are committed to working towards sustainable mineral fertiliser production. We foster an open culture of diversity and inclusion that promotes the safety and integrity of our employees, contractors, business partners, and society at large. Founded in 1905 to solve the emerging famine in Europe, Yara has a worldwide presence with about 17,000 employees and operations in over 60 countries.

More information

Paul Crack , Yara Crop Nutrition, 1800 684 266
Paul.crack@yara.com

1. Reference: C.B.I. Banadex + Yara Colombia, 2001.

NEW FACES AT ABGC

Ajay Emmanuel
Policy Officer

Ajay Emmanuel has joined the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team as a Policy Officer, bringing with him a law degree, practical experience in local government and a strong belief that good policy only works if it works for people on the ground.

Born in India and raised in Darwin, Ajay is proudly bilingual and has spent his life navigating the balance between formal frameworks and community expectations.

"I've always enjoyed the policy and legislative side of law," he says, "but not necessarily the courtroom. For me, it's about making complex systems understandable and useful - especially for people who might not always feel heard."

Before coming to ABGC, Ajay worked on the implementation of new burial and cremation legislation in the Northern Territory - a role that required patience, persistence and a lot of conversations with stakeholders unsure or even wary of change.

Ajay is looking forward to getting out of the office and onto farms. He's also excited by the diversity of the banana industry, including the increasing number of Punjabi and multicultural growers across Far North Queensland.

"Being from a South Indian background myself, I understand how important culture and connection are. If I can help bridge that gap between policy and people - even in a small way - I'll consider that a win."

Jazmin Manning
Admin Officer

With a wealth of experience in fast-paced, highly organised roles - and a fresh set of eyes on the industry – Jazmin Manning has settled into her position as Admin Officer with the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team.

Before joining the ABGC, Jazmin spent over 12 years in community pharmacy, including working in remote and maritime support roles, managing everything from medication logistics to first aid preparation for sea-going vessels across the Gulf of Carpentaria.

That same adaptability saw her succeed in real estate, where she managed residential properties, juggled tenant relationships and coordinated maintenance and compliance.

Despite being new to the role, Jazmin is already connecting with the significance of her work. "Farming in North Queensland isn't just local - it supports supply chains and communities across Australia," Jazmin says.

This growing understanding is fuelling her passion for the role and the industry.

Nisha Rani
Extension Officer

The Australian Banana Growers' Council is pleased to welcome Nisha Rani, our newest Extension Officer, who joined the BMP team three months ago. With a background in banana production and agronomy, Nisha brings experience, technical knowledge, and a deep passion for sustainable farming.

Originally from India, Nisha holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in agriculture, with a special focus on tropical crop production. Before joining ABGC, she worked in banana agronomy, collaborating with growers on improved farming techniques, pest and disease management, and post-harvest practices.

"I've always believed that strong relationships between growers and extension officers can drive real improvements on the ground," says Nisha. "Banana farming faces many common challenges across the industry—whether it's disease pressure, climate variability, or rising input costs. I'm excited to bring my experience to support growers and learn from them as well."

Since joining ABGC, Nisha has been actively engaging with growers, helping to identify practical solutions that enhance productivity and resilience on-farm. Her goal is to build trust with the community and act as a reliable source of agronomic support and innovation.

TIME TICKING ON CHLORPYRIFOS

The first deadline on the phase out of chlorpyrifos has now passed.

As of 31 May, the application of chlorpyrifos mixed with talc is no longer allowed.

On 30 September, all uses of chlorpyrifos (for example, bunch spraying) must cease.

Information is available on the ABGC website: abgc.org.au/chlorpyrifos-review

Grower case study videos can be found on the Better Bananas website: betterbananas.com.au/videos

For more information about the review itself, visit the APVMA website.

PROTECTING WORKERS, PROTECTING OUR INDUSTRY

Since July 2024, new laws have been in place to stop exploitation of migrant workers.

ABF officers have been at work visiting businesses, including in agriculture.

If you see illegal recruitment, worker exploitation, or practices that undermine fair employment, it's important to report it. This helps protect workers and the reputation of the banana industry.

- Report concerns anonymously via Border Watch
- Check staff work rights using VEVO
- Learn your obligations as an employer

Let's keep our workplaces fair, safe, and strong.

REGISTER FOR QLD CHEMCLEAR COLLECTION

Farm safety starts with responsible chemical management.

ChemClear's upcoming collection event in Queensland is your chance to safely dispose of unwanted or expired agricultural chemicals.

Keeping old or unknown chemicals on farm poses risks to people, animals, and the environment.

Products that are past their expiry date or have unknown contents can become unstable over time, increasing the chance of accidental spills, misuse, or harm. Responsible disposal is essential for maintaining a safe, clean working environment and demonstrating good chemical stewardship.

Registration is simple—just visit the Agsafe website (agsafe.org.au) or call their hotline (1800 008 182). Don't delay—register before Friday, 12 September 2025 and take an active role in maintaining a safe and sustainable farming operation.

Register now - https://www.agsafe.org.au/cc-register-chemicals

PREPARING FOR EXTREME WEATHER

Australia's cyclone season officially takes place from November to April, and it's often through that period that other areas of the country experience severe storms too.

However, as any grower knows, extreme weather doesn't tend to take note of the calendar.

- Take photos and videos of any damage caused by a weather event – this includes fencing, roads, equipment, machinery, causeways, cartons and packaging. (When possible, include an object for scale, to help demonstrate the size of the damage.)
- Keep receipts/invoices and other payment records saved, or in a safe, dry place.
- Check you have a financial plan, adequate insurance and a safety procedure.
- Keep a list of disaster contacts.

Bananas are highly susceptible to wind damage, and even low-category cyclones or severe thunderstorms can cause significant losses.

Here are the essential steps to protect your crops and minimize damage:

1. Assess Crop Development

More uniform blocks, like plant crops or early ratoons, are easier to manage.

2. Consider Canopy Removal

Removing the canopy of unbunched plants before a cyclone reduces wind resistance and minimizes the risk of plants rolling out. However, this comes at a cost: canopy removal can reduce bunch weight by 35-50% and lower the proportion of large fruit (220-260mm) by up to 35%.

3. Proper Canopy Removal Technique

When removing the canopy, avoid cutting too low on the stem.

For more detail on these steps, visit abgc.org.au and betterbananas.com.au

PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS

Floods can wash farm waste into creeks, but banana growers care deeply about the environment – our families fish, swim and enjoy these waterways too.
ABGC is working on R&D projects to reduce and manage plastic farm waste.
Growers can:
✓ Secure loose bags and materials ✓ Use local waste transfer stations ✓ Report illegal dumping

Check with your local council for plastic waste disposal options/details.
Call 1300 130 372 to report illegal dumping. Together we can keep our creeks clean.

DROP YOUR SPOT, IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE YOU'VE GOT!

DPI banana extension team

Have you scheduled regular deleafing into your work program?

The warm weather is ramping up and this is your chance to remove the spot from your canopy before the wet season kicks in. This year has certainly been challenging for growers on Queensland's wet tropical coast, with the first half of 2025 recording 3451 mm of rain at Innisfail aerodrome.

DPI's banana extension team and plant pathologist, David East have worked together to produce yellow Sigatoka information resources that include a summary of best management practices.

Dave's top tips include:

- Regularly deleaf your canopy. This is critical, as you can't spray your way out of a problem.
- Use fungicides appropriately and always follow label directions.
- Deleaf before you apply systemic fungicides, otherwise you are wasting your money and promoting resistance.
- Use the winter-spring period to clean up your canopy prior to going into the wet season.

David also shares information on block hygiene and management that can also assist with reducing disease pressure.

To find out more, check out the videos and information now available on the Better Bananas website. Or if you would like to have a chat about your yellow Sigatoka management, feel free to contact DPI's David East – 0499 046 976 or ABGC's Carl Rickson – 0447 551 473.

BE READY FOR A BITE

It's rare talking about a potentially deadly situation also happens to be a very good time – but somehow, that was absolutely the case when Billy Collett opened Banana Congress 2025.

The Australian Reptile Park manager, and venom expert, brought along a slippery mate – capable of killing the hundreds of people watching - to explain the basics of snake bite first aid.

1. Keep the bite victim calm and immobile.
2. Apply a pressure-immobilisation bandage to the bite site and the adjacent limb. This should be the same tension/tightness as a sprain. Wrap around the bite site 3 times and then wrap the rest of the limb. For example, a bite on the finger should be treated by bandaging the finger first and then the entire arm.
3. Further restrict movement by applying a splint (only if option is nearby).
4. Go straight to hospital.

Scan to visit the Australian Reptile Park page

Hort Innovation BANANA FUND

The yellow Sigatoka information resources have been curated as part of the National Banana Development and Extension Program (BA19004) which is funded by Hort Innovation, using the banana industry research and development levies and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture. The Queensland Government has also co-funded the project through the Department of Primary Industries.

Queensland Government

ABGC MEMBERS CONNECT AT CONGRESS 2025

The Australian Banana Industry Congress 2025 offered members more than just the program of speakers and events, it delivered opportunities to connect, share, and be heard.

A highlight was the members' forum, designed around ideas suggested by growers themselves. Instead of a traditional presentation, the format focused on open discussion over breakfast. Using table prompts and interactive tools, members shared insights on the issues that matter most to their businesses, while hearing from fellow growers across different regions.

The atmosphere was relaxed but productive, with ABGC directors and staff seated among attendees to ensure conversations flowed freely. Thoughtful extras from the complimentary breakfast to an exclusive member gift added to the experience, leaving members with both practical takeaways and fresh ideas.

Congratulations to Peter Inderbitzin for winning the lucky door prize, a one gallon ABGC Member/ Congress 2025 branded Yeti water bottle – perfect for the paddock!

Networking extended well beyond the breakfast, with members making the most of informal catch-ups, dedicated meeting spaces, and opportunities to engage directly with ABGC staff and directors.

Affiliate members were also an important part of Congress, with many in attendance and some taking the opportunity to showcase their products and services through a trade display. These interactions added another layer to the networking, allowing growers to explore solutions and build valuable industry connections.

ABGC thanks every member who took part for their input and energy at Congress 2025.
If you're not yet a member, now's the time to get involved! Join via abgc.org.au/membership or contact members@abgc.org.au to find out more.

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS IN CANBERRA AND BEYOND

In order to best represent members, and the Australian banana industry more broadly, the Australian Banana Growers' Council has been building on relationships with targeted politicians from all sides.

CEO Leanne Erakovic said that it was important to ensure the banana industry was front of mind with relevant federal and state representatives, and to raise awareness of key industry issues.

"I'm proud to be spending time promoting the banana industry and the people who ensure Australians have ample supply of their favourite fruit," Ms Erakovic said.

"Of course, it is also a valuable chance to discuss some of the challenges we're facing, including workforce, audit fatigue and biosecurity."

The conversations build on ABGC's election priorities, created in collaboration with members, which can be viewed in the Members' Portal.

Leanne with Pat Conaghan, Member for Cowper.

Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism, Leanne, NSW Senator Deb O'Neill and Hon Richard Marles, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SMARTER COMPLIANCE

The 2025 Banana Congress brought an important opportunity for collaboration when the Boards of Freshcare and the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) came together.

Over lunch and social discussions, Directors shared perspectives on how the Standard Owner and the banana industry can work more closely to deliver practical outcomes for growers.

Compliance is one of the most pressing issues for banana growers. While high standards are vital for food safety, worker welfare, and maintaining market trust, growers are increasingly burdened by duplicated audits, inconsistent requirements, and rising costs. Many have told ABGC that the current system is taking them away from their core business — and, for some, even taking the joy out of farming.

ABGC has made tackling these challenges a priority. Hosting Freshcare at Congress was a bonus on the back of earlier visits to Far North Queensland farms from CEO Jane Siebum. The visits gave Freshcare the chance to understand firsthand what compliance looks like on the ground, and the luncheon opportunity to talk about it. The willingness of the Freshcare directors and executive to listen and engage directly with growers has been a welcome step toward addressing industry issues.

ABGC Chair Leon Collins highlighted the importance of this collaboration, noting that while compliance underpins the industry's reputation and access to markets, it must also be workable for growers. Freshcare's engagement demonstrates that practical change is possible when standard owners and growers come together in good faith.

Importantly, ABGC views this as a benchmark for how it hopes to work with other standard owners and regulators. By building similar open, constructive relationships, the Council aims to reduce duplication, improve consistency, and ensure that compliance delivers real value without overburdening growers.

As ABGC continues its national advocacy — through the National Farmers' Federation Horticulture Council and direct engagement with government and compliance program owners — the message remains clear: growers' voices are essential to shaping a practical and effective system.

The conversations at Congress mark a positive step forward, laying the foundation for a compliance framework that protects the industry's integrity, supports productivity, and allows growers to focus on what they do best — producing world-class Australian bananas.

To have your voice at the table or to learn more, become an ABGC member! Go to abgc.org.au/membership or contact members@abgc.org.au.

The boards of Freshcare and the ABGC had the opportunity to meet and discuss key issues at Banana Congress 2025.

BANANA LEVIES:

WHAT YOU'RE PAYING FOR AND WHY IT MATTERS

As a banana grower, you contribute to a levy system that directly supports the future of our industry.

Australia's agricultural R&D levy system has been in place for 30 years and was set up to help drive agricultural innovation. Levies allow the Australian Government and primary producers to co-invest in strategic, collaborative and targeted research and development.

The system is a mandatory, industry-driven funding model where producers pay statutory levies on their products.

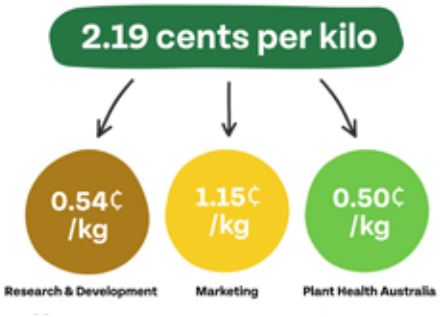
The Australian government matches expenditure on eligible R&D, **up to 0.5% of the determined industry gross value of production** and the funds are invested by industry-controlled Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) such as Hort Innovation for the banana industry, and other levy recipient bodies (e.g Plant Health Australia).

LEVY BREAKDOWN

Every kilogram of bananas produced and sold in Australia attracts a **total levy of 2.19 cents**, made up of:

- **R&D Levy** – 0.54¢/kg
- **Marketing Levy** – 1.15¢/kg
- **Plant Health Australia (PHA) Levy** – 0.50¢/kg

These levies are compulsory and collected by the Australian Government, then distributed to Hort Innovation (marketing and R&D) and Plant Health Australia.



WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

Plant Health Australia (PHA)

Funds from the PHA levy support:

- Funding the Grower Support (biosecurity) Project and management of the first *Panama TR4*-infested farm (industry-owned)
- Repayment of the banana industry's share of the *Banana Freckle* eradication program
- Ongoing commitments like:
  - *Torres Strait Exotic Fruit Flies* response
  - PHA membership and meetings
  - Government levy collection costs

Hort Innovation

Hort Innovation manages the R&D and marketing levies, directing them into strategic projects that support growers. Government contributions are matched solely for R&D investments. These investments are guided by:

- The Banana Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)
- The Annual Investment Plan (AIP)

Once priorities are set, Hort Innovation runs a tender process to select the best delivery partner.

FOCUS AREAS INCLUDE:

- Improving productivity and sustainability
- Building industry capability
- Driving consumer demand through marketing
- Delivering business insights

HOW PROJECTS ARE DELIVERED

Once priorities are set, Hort Innovation runs a tender process to select the best delivery partner. Each project includes:

- Regular milestone reporting
- A final report outlining outcomes and benefits for growers

ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BANANA GROWERS' COUNCIL

The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) acts as both a watchdog and a workhorse. The ABGC is proud to tender for and deliver PHA and Hort Innovation funded projects, ensuring grower voices are represented and industry needs are met. The ABGC also plays a hands-on role in making sure levy investments deliver real value for money for growers by keeping Hort Innovation accountable, strategic and grower focussed.

ABGC actively consults with growers to understand industry priorities. These insights feed into Hort Innovation to help shape the blueprints for how levy funds are spent. ABGC keeps growers informed through ebulletins, Congress, workshops, the Australian Bananas magazine, the website and in direct engagement with growers.

ABGC membership fees are separate from Government levies and are not collected through the levy system. Membership fees are vital to maintaining ABGC's role as a strong advocate for growers and for delivering best outcomes for the banana industry.

CRACKER OF A Congress on the Coast

Growers, researchers and representatives from across the supply chain took part in the 16th Australian Banana Industry Congress from 6-8 August.

Held at RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast, the event aimed to provide inspiration, practical information and latest science and marketing updates. On top of that, it's a valuable chance to network and kick back with a number of social events on-site.

Congress Chair Paul Inderbitzin, a grower from Lakeland, said the program was designed to tick a number of boxes in a limited timeframe.

"We knew this event had to deliver when it came to relevant content, world-class speakers and information you could actually take back to your business.

"We're always listening and learning, but I think we delivered on these goals and hopefully gave attendees a really good time too."

From the Science Symposium on Wednesday through to the Banana Ball on Friday night, the sessions were jam-packed to make the most of having so many people under one roof – but there was plenty of time for networking too.

The banana industry is varied and dynamic – from solo farmers through to large businesses – but the aim was to ensure everyone walked away with at least one thing they could put into practice, as well as motivation and plenty of good memories with friends new and old.

Whether you polished up on snake-bite first aid, found a new way to tackle soil health, started a conversation on succession or took inspiration from Jana Pittman – the event needed to be well worth your while.

"It's huge commitment to get there – to take that time away from the farm," said Mr Inderbitzin. "We really appreciate those who were able to make the trip, and hope you'll be able to share any new ideas with those who couldn't join us this time round."

Mr Inderbitzin also paid tribute to the sponsors and exhibitors who make Banana Congress, including the Science Symposium, possible.

"Your support is hugely appreciated and it means a lot to know you back industry to hold this kind of event."

Speakers at the 2025 event included:

Pip Courtney – ABC Landline host and our 2025 MC

Jana Pittman – world champion athlete, banana ambassador, media personality, doctor

Billy Collett – Australian Reptile Park expert snake handler (and milker!)

Professor Altus Viljoen – Global Panama TR4 expert from Stellenbosch University

+ growers, soil experts, banana marketers, workforce specialists and more

Delegates will soon have access to a range of recorded presentations from the event. If weren't at Banana Congress, but you're interested in checking them out, please email communications@abgc.org.au

Keep an eye on ABGC communications for more stories from speakers at the event too!

Amy Spear, ABGC's Communications Manager, wishes to extend a heartfelt thanks to those who participated in the Banana Congress program committee. Your thoughts, time, feedback and enthusiasm make the world of difference and ensure the event really has industry at its core.

Grower representatives
Paul Inderbitzin (Congress Chair)
Doriana Mangili
James Howe
Tayla Mackay
Jen Crema (Banana Women's Network lunch coordinator)
Jade Buchanan

QDPI and NSW DPI
Tegan Cavallaro (Science Symposium co-coordinator)
Stephen Norman

Hort Innovation
Sarah Strutt

ABGC
Dr Rosie Godwin (R&D Manager, Science Symposium co-coordinator)
Kathryn Dryden (Stakeholder Engagement & Advocacy Manager)
Skye Orsmond (Communications Officer)

A huge thank you to MCI Australia, Banana Congress' professional conference organiser. In particular, Imogene Shipstone, Kathy Leung and Aidan Coates who worked closely with ABGC to deliver the event.

Of course, the list of people who contributed to the 2025 Banana Congress is extensive. Please know that every answered call, text message sent and survey responded to is greatly appreciated.

30 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST CONGRESS

It was fitting for the 2025 Australian Banana Industry Congress to be held on the Gold Coast – it's where it all began in 1995!

While the venue and the hairstyles may have been slightly different, the purpose of the event remains the same 30 years later: to celebrate, to inform, to inspire and to create a sense of unity.

6 AUGUST 2025

SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Sponsored by Woolworths

More than 180 people packed the room for the 4th Banana Scientific Symposium. The event, held in conjunction with Banana Congress, provides research, development and extension teams a chance to present more detailed accounts of their latest research.

The Australian banana industry is well supported by world-leading researchers from various government agencies, universities, and other service providers. Once again, the symposium proved a valuable platform for fostering communication and collaboration among researchers, but also provided more detailed insights to interested banana growers.

Almost 100 per cent of attendees indicated they would be back for the next symposium.

The event was supported by Woolworths Group, and the special guest speaker was sponsored by the Australian Centre of International Agricultural Research. The event was facilitated by ABGC's Dr Rosie Godwin, project leader of the Banana R&D Co-ordination Program (BA20002), and Tegan Cavallaro, project leader National Banana Development & Extension Program (BA19004), Department of Primary Industries.

WELCOME DRINKS

Sponsored by Australian Produce Partners

7-8 AUGUST 2025

DAY 1

TRADESHOW EVENING

Sponsored by Costa








BANANA WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Sponsored by Packall



DAY 2





BANANA INDUSTRY CELEBRATES BEST OF THE BUNCH

Australia's banana industry celebrated some of its best and brightest at the Australian Banana Industry Congress.

Banana Congress concluded with the Banana Ball, a chance to recognise the incredible efforts of a diverse range of people contributing to the $700 million industry.

Leon Collins, chair of the Australian Banana Growers' Council, said Congress – and the Ball itself – provide a chance to step back from the day-to-day of farming to acknowledge those who have contributed so much to the industry.

"Now, more than ever, we are time poor and juggling the realities of farming with increasing red tape.

"Combined with biosecurity concerns and all of our personal commitments, to say this opportunity is rare is a bit of an understatement."

Mr Collins noted the growers, advocates and researchers who received an award truly represented the best qualities of the industry.

"We are lucky to have so many people who have dedicated themselves not only to their own farm, business or research field – but to bettering bananas in Australia and around the world.

The ABGC also announced two new Life Members: Barry Lowe and Dennis Howe (the latter posthumously).

"It was a wonderful chance to acknowledge these giants of our industry – and it's pretty remarkable to see the next generations of their families involved in agriculture too," Mr Collins said.

Life Membership is a rare honour, last given out by the ABGC Board some 10 years ago.

"I couldn't imagine two more fitting people to be recognised in this way," he added.

"I congratulate those who were acknowledged with an award, and I hope that everyone involved in Congress more broadly took home a renewed sense of purpose and some practical tips."

2025 Banana Industry Awards

Future Farming Award: Gavin Eilers

Recognises a banana grower who not only runs a productive farming operation, but goes above and beyond to champion practices that benefit both the environment and the broader industry.

Gavin Eilers has long been a trusted figure in the banana industry. He is known for his practical knowledge, willingness to share, and strong connections across the grower community. His contribution to the Best Management Practice program has been significant—not only as a participant but as a partner. Gavin regularly supports other growers in adopting best practice and has been a valuable sounding board for the BMP team on everything from paddock design to nutrient management.

His involvement in the Nutrient Rate Project has helped drive real change. By helping build a stronger understanding of nitrogen and phosphorus use in banana farming, Gavin is supporting long-term environmental improvements that will benefit not just his own farm, but farms across the region.

Beyond this, Gavin plays an important mentorship role—particularly with more than 20 Punjabi growers supplying fruit to Tropicana. Whether it's weekend visits to check on paddocks or answering questions late into the evening, Gavin gives his time freely and with purpose.

Industry Champion (sponsored by Freshcare): Jim Pekin

Recognises someone who works in the supply chain, or in advocacy, for example, who has shown next-level dedication in furthering the interests of our industry.

Jim Pekin is the former Chief Executive Officer of ABGC and began his tenure in the wake of Cyclone Yasi. He worked tirelessly on behalf of commercial banana growers for 11 years and left behind a remarkable legacy, particularly through his role in the management of TR4 in Queensland. Jim assisted the ABGC board in the purchase of the first property found to have TR4 in Tully, then played a role in the development and implementation of a focussed biosecurity program.

Banana Research Excellence (sponsored by All Round Australia Recycling): Tony Pattison

While we've long celebrated the role of our world-leading researchers in growing and future-proofing Australian bananas, this new category specifically recognises someone working in the banana science/ research space.

Tony Pattison has been based at South Johnstone for 30 years, working principally on soil borne issues faced by the banana industry in the surrounding region. Highly regarded and in demand in the soil health discipline – both here and across the globe – he always finds time to share his knowledge with others. We saw his action and dedication in this space through several presentations during the Banana Congress.

Awards of Honour: Chris Collins (WA) and Sellars Bananas (QLD)

Recognising industry-minded growers who are generous with their time and knowledge. They've also played a role in bettering our industry and are just all-round excellent growers.

Chris Collins has been instrumental in the success of the Carnarvon Sweeter Banana Cooperative. A true advocate for the Western Australian industry, he not only works on his own farm, but he chairs the cooperative and fronts campaigns and media when necessary to promote their fruit. Working with the cooperative, he's embraced innovative options for waste – like those freeze dried bananas we heard about during the Congress – and he's guided growers through their fair share of natural disasters.

Sellars Bananas have an exceptional reputation within industry – and with anyone who tastes their fruit, really. Innovative, hard-working and always willing to share, Naomi and her sister Belinda created something very special at Mission Beach, taking over from their father who established the business in the late 1960s.

Naomi was at the Ball to accept the award, but the ABGC also wishes to recognise more than 20 years of hard work from Belinda, who lost her battle with cancer in 2020.


Jim Pekin


Naomi Browning


Gavin Eilers


Tony Pattison


Chris Collins

LIFE MEMBERSHIP : BARRY LOWE AND DENNIS HOWE

Barry's son, current ABGC deputy chair Stephen Lowe, accepts the Life Membership on behalf of his father, Barry.

James Howe, son of the late Dennis Howe, accepted the Life Membership on his Dad's behalf.

Known for his vision, determination, and tireless work ethic, Barry Lowe has been instrumental in helping shape the industry into the thriving, innovative sector it is today.

Barry was among the first in Queensland to trial bunch covers at a time when plastic bagging was unheard of in the state, giving local growers a competitive edge and paving the way for improved fruit quality across the region.

Barry also played a pivotal role in the very first refrigerated transport of bananas to Sydney. Throughout his career, Barry has championed practices that improve productivity, strengthen biosecurity, and protect the long-term sustainability of banana farming.

Dennis Howe was a truly innovative grower, one who saw the potential of bananas on the Tablelands early and, in doing so, helped to create a stronger, more resilient future for Australian banana growers.

Dennis began farming on his parents' soldier's settlement property near Tolga, initially growing tobacco, melons and pumpkins. Now, Howe Farming Group runs multiple properties and is known for producing excellent bananas, avocados and coffee (amongst other things).

Dennis was always happy to share his knowledge for the benefit of other growers and has been recognised with numerous awards, including the inaugural ABC Rural-Kondinin Group Farming Legend of the Year award in 2016.

2025 BANANA BALL

SUCCESSION PLANNING – FUTUREPROOFING SUCCESS

By Skye Orsmond

When I ask banana growers what gets them up in the morning, there's a common reply: "Working towards something for the next generation."

If that's one of the main reasons we farm, why is succession planning so often left at the bottom of the to-do list?

At this year's Australian Banana Industry Congress, farmer and intergenerational succession mentor John Moor spoke on this very topic. With more than 200 farming families across Australia and overseas turning to him for guidance, John has seen first-hand the challenges and opportunities that come with planning for the future.

I've also had the privilege of experiencing this process personally. As a fourth-generation farmer in Tully, my family invited John to guide us through our own succession journey.

A Family in Transition

Our farm, Fruit Forest Farm, was founded 42 years ago by my parents, Peter and Alison Salleras. As they began planning for retirement, the question of "what's next?" became more pressing.

We spent two days with John in a neutral setting – complete with catering, which, as John points out, is one of those practical touches that helps tough conversations run more smoothly.

The process gave us space to ask the difficult questions, unpack our needs, and map out our goals. While my dad is still active on the farm, he has passed the decision-making baton on to my husband, Warren. It hasn't all been smooth sailing, but the planning process has helped us make decisions with intent and awareness.

As Dad reflected:

"The world is changing, and we older growers need to be adaptable and light on our feet. Succession planning spreads the load of what's inevitable over time. It should be like farm planning – as inevitable as the sun coming up."

He added that flexibility is essential:

"People often see things in black and white. But there's always grey – and in that grey, families can find the meeting place where everyone's needs are respected."

Universal Challenges

From multimillion-dollar enterprises to small family businesses, John has found the same issues arise.

"Most of the time when I get a call, it's not really about succession," he explained. "It's about all the other things that need to be in place before succession can happen."

Podcaster Ben Law (The Financial Bloke) echoed this in recent research findings from the U.S., noting:

"Around 60% of businesses suffer from the 'three-generation curse' – two to make it, one to break it. It usually comes down to a lack of communication and trust. Succession issues are rarely about business structures – they're about people."

John shared one moving story of a father sitting silently in a family meeting until he finally spoke through tears: "There's something I need to say... there's another child at play."

Moments like this, he said, show why it's vital to create safe spaces where honest conversations can happen.

Start with Needs

Ultimately, John's advice is simple:

- Begin by uncovering each person's needs – whether that's financial security, cash flow, or recognition.
- Acknowledge emotions and show gratitude.
- Accept that succession is a process, not a one-off conversation.

Or as John puts it,

"Succession planning is about living. Estate planning is about dying."

Warren, Skye and Max Orsmond with Alison and Peter Salleras in 2019.

How to hold a family meeting

Before the meeting

- Agree to have a FACILITATOR
- Select a NEUTRAL VENUE
- Arrange CATERING
- Set an AGENDA
- Invite ALL family members
- Set Clear GOALS
- Preferably over 2 DAYS

At the meeting

- Have agreed GROUND RULES. A code of conduct.
- Allow open communications
- Let people finish their sentence.
- Listen without intending to respond.
- Let EMOTIONS flow.
- DEAL WITH CONFLICT.
- Ask the DIFFICULT questions

After the meeting

- Circulate MINUTES
- Set ACTIONS
- Agree on TIMELINES
- Set next MEETING DATE

Source: John Moor.

For more information:

Listen: The AgriCoach Podcast Wealth and Wisdom with Ben Law The Financial Bloke – episode #75 What I Learned from over 200 Family Succession Meetings.

John Moor
john@growmoorbiological.com.au
0449 887 875

To see John's full PowerPoint presentation, presented at the Australian Banana Industry Congress visit the ABGC website and search John Moor.

TURNING BANANA WASTE INTO TREASURE

UNLOCKING THE HIDDEN VALUE OF CAVENDISH BANANA INFLORESCENCE

Dr. Nuwanthi Senevirathna, Postdoctoral Researcher, Queensland University of Technology, and Professor Azharul Karim, Lead, Advanced Drying and Sustainable Energy Group, Queensland University of Technology

Australia's banana industry is well-known for its high-quality fruit, but why are edible and nutritious banana bells ending up landfill?

Groundbreaking research conducted at Queensland University of Technology has revealed the untapped potential of the *Cavendish banana inflorescence*, the flowering part of the plant, usually discarded as waste. Our findings show that this underutilised by-product is a rich source of bioactive compounds and a micronutrient source with powerful health benefits, offering a sustainable and profitable new direction for the banana industry.

This research was carried out from 2021 to 2025 at the Queensland University of Technology, in four comprehensive stages. The first involved the optimisation of extraction techniques using a green technology known as Accelerated Solvent Extraction (ASE). ASE proved to be highly efficient in extracting phenolic compounds and antioxidants from fresh banana inflorescence. This method not only improved yield and preserved the integrity of these valuable compounds but also reduced processing time and solvent usage by 75%, making it ideal for large-scale commercial applications. Additionally, the micronutrient profile of banana inflorescence was examined, and identified that banana inflorescence is a rich source of macro elements Na, K, P, Ca, Mg, and microelements Se, V, Mn, Cu, Zn, which are essential minerals for the human body.

In the second phase, we explored how various drying methods impacted the functional and bioactive properties of the inflorescence. Among convective oven drying, freeze drying, and intermittent microwave convective drying, freeze drying preserved the highest levels of phenolic compounds and antioxidant activity. This phase demonstrated that the method of drying plays a critical role in determining the functional properties of banana inflorescence powders, with significant implications for food fortification and supplement formulation. The intermittent microwave convective drying method (IMCD), while slightly less effective in preserving phenolics compared to freeze drying, cut down processing time by more than 90%, making it highly suitable for commercial-scale operations. Importantly, therapeutic compounds such as caffeic acid, gallic acid, kaempferol, and quercetin were retained, further validating the medicinal value of this agricultural by-product.

Building on our findings from the first and second phases, we discovered that banana inflorescence is a rich source of phenolic compounds, flavonoids, and essential micronutrients. Our research highlighted the presence of specific bioactive compounds in banana inflorescence, including antioxidants, antibacterial agents, and anticancer properties. Notably, we identified anthocyanins, which serve as natural colorants and exhibit pH-sensitive characteristics. In the third phase of our study, we refined the process of extracting anthocyanins from dried inflorescence.

Through advanced chromatographic techniques, we successfully identified key anthocyanins: cyanidin-3-rutinoside, delphinidin-3-rutinoside, and petunidin-3-rutinoside. These compounds are well-known for their anticancer and anti-inflammatory effects, making them suitable for applications in both the pharmaceutical and food industries. Furthermore, the pH-sensitive color changes exhibited by these anthocyanins present exciting possibilities for innovative smart packaging solutions in the food sector, as well as for the creation of natural food colorants. Overall, our findings underscore the potential of banana inflorescence as a versatile and valuable resource in various applications.

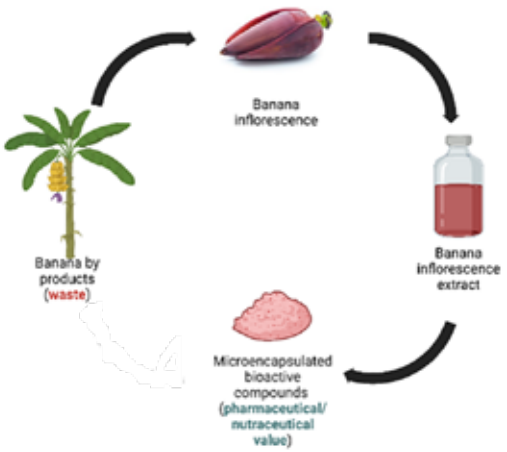
The final phase of our research focused on enhancing the stability of these anthocyanin-rich extracts through microencapsulation. This process helped protect the compounds from degradation over time, particularly when stored at freezer temperatures. The encapsulated powders showed excellent retention of bioactivity and are suitable for use in long-lasting health supplements and food additives. Our work also revealed that incorporating small amounts of acid into the extraction process further boosted the concentration of polyphenols and anthocyanins, offering a scalable and cost-effective method for functional food, beverage, and novel dietary supplement development.

Our research highlights a major opportunity for the banana industry to turn waste into value-added products. However, specific drying methods, extraction techniques, encapsulation parameters, and storage conditions are the main key controllers of preserving the bioactive properties of banana inflorescence, which highlights the importance of research and development in this field. These research findings can be scaled up to an industrial scale by collaborating with Australian banana growers in the future. By repurposing banana inflorescence, we can reduce agricultural waste, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute to the circular economy. More importantly, it provides a pathway for banana growers and processors to diversify their income streams and tap into the growing market for natural, sustainable, and health-focused products.

Our work directly supports Australia's goals in climate action, sustainable production, and innovation. It aligns with key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Beyond environmental benefits, our findings hold real commercial potential for developing food fortifiers, nutraceuticals, and pharmaceutical ingredients.

We are now seeking collaboration partners across the banana supply chain to help us scale and commercialise this innovation. Whether you're a grower interested in piloting on-farm applications, a processor looking to expand product lines, or an investor passionate about green technologies, we welcome the opportunity to work with you. The groundwork has been laid — now is the time to transform it into real-world impact.

Waste banana inflorescence in Australia.



End product developed by ADSER Group-QUT.

Potential applications in food/health industries.

NITROGEN AND PHOSPHORUS RATE TRIAL: FIRST YEAR OF RESULTS

Alex Lindsay, Senior Research Agronomist, Department of Primary Industries (Queensland)

The largest replicated multi-rate nitrogen and phosphorus trial ever established in bananas in Queensland was planted in October 2023 at the South Johnstone Research Facility. This article summarises some of the key results from the first year of growth.

The plants fertilised at 20 kg N/ha/month had significantly higher yield per bunch than those which received less fertiliser, but were not significantly different from those that received more fertiliser (30 kg N/ha/month) except for having smaller followers at time of harvesting the plant crop.

Soil water nitrate-N losses were higher for the highest nitrogen rate than lower rates.

There were no significant differences in growth or yield between phosphorus rates.

Establishment

Tissue-cultured Williams Cavendish bananas were planted on 24-25 October 2023, in an offset-double row planting. The initial planting density was 1504 plants per hectare. It later emerged that many of the plants were off-types, which complicated trial management, although they were scattered randomly independent of fertiliser treatment.

The trial is in two parts: nitrogen (N) rate trial (54 plots) and phosphorus (P) rate trial (18 plots).

The nitrogen trial had four rates in the first year: 0, 10, 20 and 30 kg N per ha per month as urea. Starter fertiliser (40 kg N/ha) was applied at planting in late October 2023 excluding the nil N plots. Fertigation began in January and occurred four times per month except from March to May when granular urea was surface-applied to the bed fortnightly. The annual rates of N per hectare were 0, 160, 280 and 400 kg.

The phosphorus trial also had four treatments, but the same amount of P (60 kg per ha) is applied each year at different time intervals including pre-plant, and compared to nil P. The soil has a moderate phosphorus buffer index, and a relatively low available P compared to most commercial banana farms (20-30 mg/kg Colwell P).

Weather

Rainfall in the year after planting was 4372 mm, which was above average. More than half fell between mid-December and late February, during the period of floral initiation, which may have affected the growth and yield results.

Growth rate

In the N trial, the nil N plants were significantly shorter, thinner and slower than the fertilised plants. There were no differences between the three fertilised treatments, except for follower height at harvest, which was significantly taller for the higher rate. The proportion of plants that had belled each week was lower for the 10 kg per month N rate initially, but by the end of belling there was no difference in average belling time between the three N rates (Figure 1).

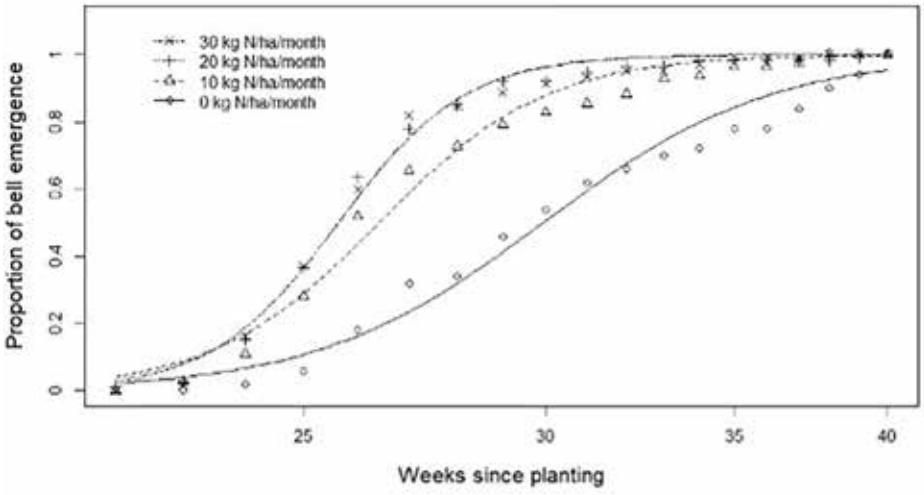


Figure 1 Cumulative weekly bell emergence of plant crop. There was no significant difference between the 20 and 30 kg per month N rates. It took longer for the 10 kg per month N rate plants to reach 50% bell emergence, however the average time until 100% of plants had belled was not different between rates.

Measuring fingers as part of the trial.

In the P trial there were no significant growth differences between treatments. There was no difference in initial height growth, unlike at the previous P trial (planted in 2019), as reported in Australian Bananas in April 2022.

Foliar sampling

Leaves were sampled in the N trial, approximately every 4 – 6 weeks. The samples collected before fertigation showed minimal difference between the 0 kg N treatment that had not received pre-plant fertiliser and those that had. Foliar nitrogen peaked 15 weeks after planting, with all rates higher than 3.2% (Figure 2). This coincided with the period of floral initiation and may explain the limited difference between treatments.

Yield

The highest fertiliser rate had significantly heavier bunches than lower rates, however the net weight of fruit (bunch minus stalk) was not significantly different between the two highest rates (Table 1). The pulp length and proportion of fruit within commercial size ranges were not significantly different between fertiliser rates. There were no differences in the phosphorus trial.

Table 1. Yield parameters of N trial fruit, plant crop

Nitrogen rate per month (kg /ha)	Gross bunch weight	Net fruit weight	Pulp length on hand 3
0	11.96 d	10.83 c	20.34 b
10	16.88 c	15.22 b	21.67 a
20	18.52 b	16.66 a	21.77 a
30	19.45 a	17.36 a	22.05 a

Treatments with a letter in common are not significantly different (95% confidence interval)

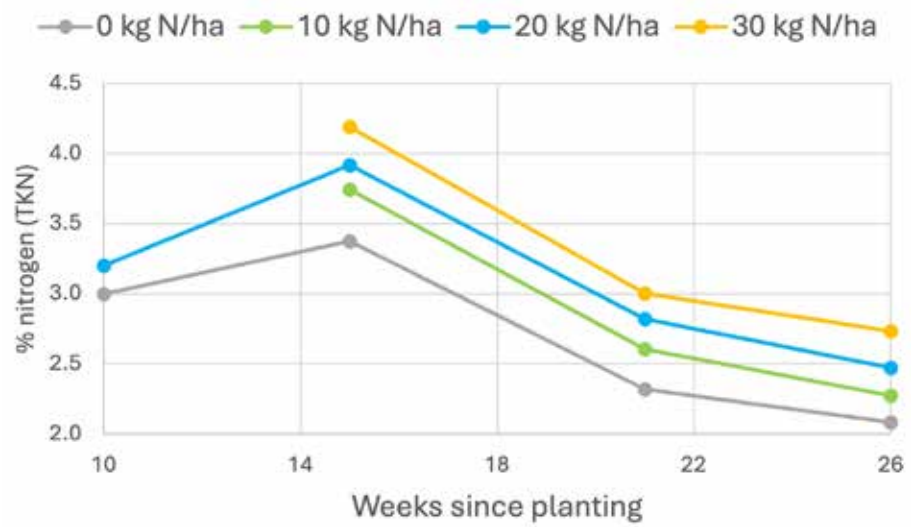


Figure 2 Mean leaf nitrogen content in nitrogen trial (Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (%w/w)). The concentration of nitrogen in the leaf reflected the rate of applied nitrogen. Note that the first sample was collected before fertigation, and shows minimal difference between the plants that had received pre-plant fertiliser (blue line) and those which had not (grey line).

Soil water

A network of Drainage Flux Meter (DFM) lysimeters had been installed in the N trial soon after planting, to allow measurement and sampling of water draining through the soil.

Large amounts of nitrogen moved through the soil water the first few months after planting. Over 40% of the total annual nitrogen load was leached in the first two months, before fertigation commenced, indicating it came from natural mineralisation of organic nitrogen after cultivation. Since April the load of the nil fertiliser plots has stabilised to a low level, with 78 mg N leached in 182 days. In the same time the average load of the 10, 20 and 30 kg plots were 103, 117 and 140 mg N respectively (Figure 3). Most of this occurred episodically during periods of heavy rain.

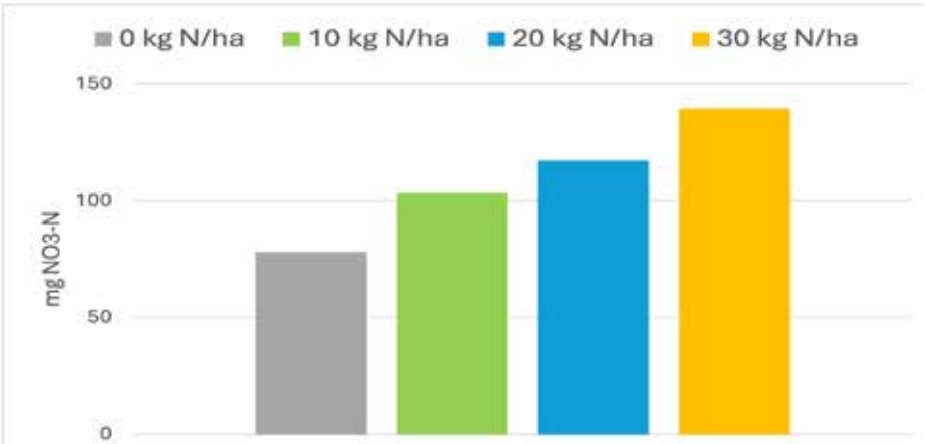
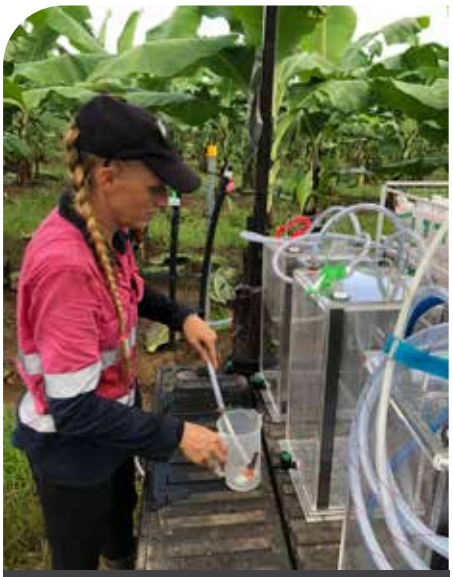


Figure 3 Soil water nitrate-nitrogen load per DFM from 30 April to 29 October 2024. The highest losses occur at the highest applied fertiliser rate.

Recording measurements by scanner.



Water sampling underway.

Want to know more?

In the next edition of Australian Bananas magazine we will report the results of the second year, including the first ratoon crop. For further information please email alex.lindsay@dpi.qld.gov.au

The Banana Nutrient Rate Trials project is funded by the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by DPI.

RESEARCHERS FIND NO LINK BETWEEN LEAF RUST DISEASES OF BANANA AND NATIVE CARDAMOM

Kathy Grice, Kaylene Bransgrove and David East – Department of Primary Industries

Banana leaf rust, or 'rust' as it is commonly referred to by growers, is caused by the fungus Uredo musae and was confirmed to be in the Wet Tropics region over 30 years ago.

It has been recorded in Queensland from as far north as Bamaga on the western tip of Cape York Peninsula to as far south as Tully.

Symptoms of rust are typically pencil-thin reddish-brown streaks, which can join together, causing yellowing and death of the infected leaf area. From a distance, rust lesions could be confused with those produced by other foliar diseases, including yellow Sigatoka, black Sigatoka and Cordana leaf spot. Rust can be easily distinguished from these other diseases by the reddish-brown powdery spore masses found mainly on the underside of the leaves (Figure 1).

Similar symptoms have also been observed on native cardamom, also known as Scott's ginger (Hornstedtia scottiana) (Figure 2). Some growers and consultants dealing with the management of banana leaf rust have suggested that this plant may be an alternative host and could be contributing to the issue.

To investigate this possibility, banana leaf rust samples were taken from commercial farms and native cardamon samples were collected from plants in remnant rainforest next to banana blocks and roadside vegetation in the Wet Tropics. Using molecular techniques to analyse the DNA, researchers in Mareeba were able to identify the fungus causing the rust symptoms in both the banana and native cardamon leaf samples.

The results are in, and the fungus causing leaf rust in bananas is not the same as the one in the native cardamom. Researchers confirmed that Uredo musae was the causal organism of the banana leaf rust, and Phakopsora elletariae was determined to be the cause of the rust symptoms on native cardamom. The only link between the two fungi is that the hosts grow in a similar location, and that environmental conditions in these areas are suitable for disease development.

Banana leaf rust is regarded as a minor problem and is usually managed by fungicide programs applied for other leaf diseases, such as yellow Sigatoka. In recent years, consultants have reported an increase in the occurrence and severity of banana leaf rust in certain regions of the wet tropics. If you see banana leaf rust on your farm, please contact your local DPI plant pathology or extension team on 13 25 23. Your information is important in establishing the extent of the problem, which can be used as justification for additional research on this emerging pathogen.

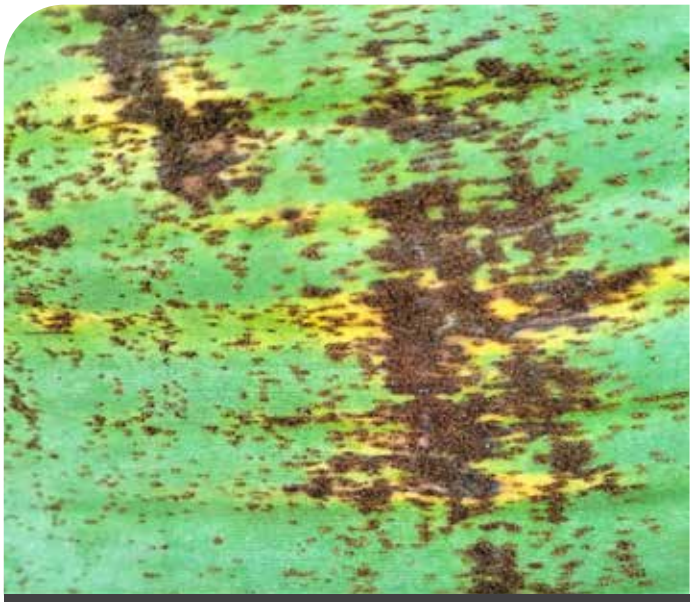


Figure 1. Reddish-brown powdery spore masses on the underside of banana leaf.

Figure 2. Typical pencil thin streaks present on *Hornstedtia scottiana* (native cardamom).

Hort Innovation Strategic levy investment | BANANA FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the banana research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

PROMISING PREDATORS

BANANA INTEGRATED PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT (IPDM) HIGHLIGHTS - BA21004

The use of insect predators (namely mites) has shown promise for the management of flower thrips and rust thrips, two of the major bunch pests that downgrade banana fruit quality.

Results showed predators in combination with the use of paper bunch covers reduced the incidence of fruit blemishes, improving fruit quality aligned with the current market specifications (Figure 1). A new trial has been instigated to determine if insect predators thrive under plastic compared to the paper bunch covers and whether multiple applications of predators are required to achieve results equivalent to the use of traditional insecticides.

A systems approach trial has also been initiated to investigate the use of Bacchus®, a sub-species of *Bacillus thuringiensis (B. thuringiensis* Berliner subsp, *aizawai* strain GC-91) applied as a standard bunch spray. In addition, different coloured bunch covers, materials, with and without liners will be assessed for damage caused by flower thrips, rust thrips and scab moth. Assessments will also be conducted to determine if these treatments have any effect on the severity of fungal issues including sooty mould, sooty blotch and fruit speckle.

The yellow Sigatoka chemical program trial was completed by the end of 2024 under trying weather conditions resulting in moderate to severe disease pressure throughout the entire trial's duration. The Mancozeb program had the lowest disease severity rating upon completion of the trial but was not significantly different to other protectant programs based on Champ® Dry Prill; Chlorothalonil; Serenade® Prime or BioPest® Oil with the addition of ExcaliaTM or Sercadis®, both Group 7 (SDHi fungicides). Two application rates of BioPest® Oil were applied as treatment options for organic growers, one being 5L/ha (industry standard) and the other 7L/ha. Although no phytotoxicity was observed with the 7L/ha rate, improved efficacy was not significant.

Research on sooty blotch and flyspeck is a complex issue with at least five fungal organisms associated with a range of symptoms and the list is still growing. To date, the organisms include *Chaetothyrina musarum, Diatractium sp., Schizothyrium sp., Ramichloridium sp*. and the newly identified *Queenslandosphaerella musae*. The latter two fungi are the most commonly observed. Laboratory studies are being conducted to determine if any of the fungicides registered for use on banana have the potential to minimise the growth of these organisms. Three different bacterial genera (not known to be disease-causing in banana) are also being evaluated for their potential to act as antagonists toward the sooty blotch and flyspeck organisms.

Disease diagnostics conducted within the project have also highlighted the recent increase in bacterial corm rot tends to be seasonal (hot and wet conditions). Depending on the severity of the symptoms, the firmness of the rot and the associated odour, different bacteria are being recovered.

Figure 1: Comparison of bunch pest control using insect predators in combination with paper bunch covers. Left, no treatment (no predator) and paper bag, versus below, predator treatment with paper bunch cover.

Hort Innovation Strategic levy investment | BANANA FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the banana research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au

QBAN SCHEME FACILITIES

QUALITY APPROVED BANANA NURSERY

Mission Beach Tissue Culture Laboratory and Nursery	07 4068 8553	sdlavis4@bigpond.com	Lindsay Road (PO Box 326), Mission Beach QLD 4852
Lowes TC Pty Ltd Laboratory and Nursery	02 4389 8750	Greg@lowestc.com.au Patricia@lowestc.com.au Natasha@lowestc.com.au	202 Tumbi Rd, Tumbi Umbi NSW 2261
SIVAL FARMING TISSUE CULTURE NURSERY	07 4068 8559	sdlavis4@bigpond.com	Dati Road, Walkamin QLD 4872
Yuruga Laboratory and Nursery	07 4093 3826	admin@howefarms.com.au	5970 Kennedy Highway, Walkamin QLD 4872
Ausplant Nursery	07 4662 4934	brady@ausplantnursery.com.au	72 Winton St (PO Box 766), Dalby QLD 4405

BANANA BITES

BACTERIAL CORM AND FINGER ROT

What's new to an old story?

Nandita Pathania – Department of Primary Industries (Mareeba)

What's new?

Banana corm rot is one of the most significant bacterial diseases of banana in tropical and subtropical regions. It was formally and still commonly referred to by many growers as 'Erwinia'. Discoveries in recent years have led to the identification of two new bacterial organisms, Dickeya fangzhongdai and Dickeya zeae, that are commonly associated with symptoms of corm and finger rot in comparison to the historically known corm rot pathogens. It is uncertain if these newly emerging pathogens are displacing or becoming more dominant in comparison to the earlier described pathogens, Pectobacterium carotovorum (formerly Erwinia carotovora) and Dickeya chrysanthemi (formerly Erwinia chrysanthemi).

There is no known chemical or biological control effective for the management of bacterial diseases. However, recent research funded by Queensland DPI innovation grants recovered and identified two bacteriophages (phages - viruses that target and infect bacteria) sourced from cow dung from the Atherton Tablelands. Under laboratory conditions, the phages proved effective by killing the banana corm and finger rot-causing bacteria. This research shows promise and could lead to the development of future projects to test how well these phages work under field conditions. If it proves effective the aim would be to develop a commercial product to manage soft rot bacteria.

Symptoms to look for

Plants infected with bacteria show external symptoms of leaf yellowing or scorching of leaf margins (Figure A), wilting and plant stunting. However, these symptoms can also be confused with other diseases, namely nematode infection and Fusarium wilt. If suspect plants are observed, don't cut or dispose of plants, but contact your local DPI plant pathology local extension team or Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. Internal symptoms of affected plants include black discolouration along the margin of infected plant parts, including the corm, pseudostem and bunch stalk (Figures B and C). In the case of fruit, the peel of affected fingers turns brown, and the flesh or pulp becomes soft and mushy (Figures D and E). Affected mature plants can roll out or topple under windy conditions, or snap at the point of the rotted rhizome. Infection occurs primarily in the summer months (Jan-April) when weather conditions are hot and wet. Rotting caused by Pectobacterium spp. cause severe breakdown of plant tissue and a putrid odour in comparison to Dickeya spp. related rots.

How does the disease spread?

The soft rotting bacteria can survive in soil and surface water, as well as in plant debris and undecomposed organic matter and remain dormant for long periods. The disease is often introduced into new areas through infected soil and at the time of planting when corms are trimmed. The disease usually develops when the plant is weakened due to other pests, diseases, or environmental stresses. The presence of both free water and waterlogged conditions provides nutrients for the bacteria to build up within the plant, resulting in the production of enzymes that degrade the plant cell wall and cause the breakdown of plant tissue. Bacteria enter the water conducting vessels through natural openings and wounds and can be spread from plant to plant by insects and mechanical wounds (desuckering). The infection then tends to spread towards the centre of the rhizome. Dickeya species cause severe rotting at higher temperatures than Pectobacterium and can grow at 39 °C.

What is the host range?

Both bacteria (Pectobacterium and Dickeya) are virulent in nature and cause soft rot symptoms in banana, potato, carrot, onion, orchids, pineapple and taro. In addition to banana, Dickeya fangzhongdai has also been recovered from rhizome rot of taro in Far North Queensland.

Management options

Like most bacterial diseases of this nature, chemical control options are not effective. The disease can only be managed by following integrated management strategies. It includes the selection of clean planting material by choosing disease free sword suckers or use of tissue culture plants from accredited nurseries. The tissue-cultured plants eliminate the risk of introducing pests or disease into a new plantation. The well-balanced nutrition, regular monitoring for insect and invertebrate pests (nematode and weevil borer), and improving drainage can reduce the population of bacterium in the environment and decrease the incidence of bacterial corm rot.

In the case of bacterial diseases exotic to Australia (Moko, Blood disease and Xanthomonas wilt), management practices used overseas to minimise spread have included protective plant sprays of copper or mancozeb fungicide, in addition to the removal of infected plants and crop debris, followed by the application of bleaching powder on and around the soil at the infected site. The cleaning of cutting tools and equipment with clean water and laundry detergent, followed by disinfecting by dipping in a 3.5% sodium hypochlorite solution for 1-2 minutes is common practice. When using chemicals, ensure they are being used in accordance with the label specifications.

Figure 1. Banana corm rot (A-D) and finger rot symptoms (E-F).

Hort Innovation BANANA FUND

This regular feature is brought to you by the Banana Integrated Pest and Disease Management program team at the Queensland DPI.

BANANA FRECKLE MANAGEMENT SUPPORTED BY OFFICIAL CONTROL

Banana freckle in the Northern Territory is now entering a 'transition to management' phase which will be supported by official control to help prevent its further spread.

This decision has been made by a national committee of affected parties, including government representatives from the Commonwealth, relevant states and territories, Greenlife Industry Australia, and the banana industry.

The decision was made based on scientific information that demonstrates eradication is no longer technically feasible.

Key points:

- The disease will remain under official control in the Northern Territory. This means the **rest of Australia is still considered absent of freckle**.
- There are strict measures in place protecting other states and territories. Banana producing states already have stringent movement controls in place for banana freckle.
- Banana freckle is currently restricted to a small area of the Northern Territory. Ongoing monitoring for new detections of banana freckle and community awareness will be essential in maintaining official control.

The transition to management plan will also focus on:

- building industry and community capability,
- engagement and communication with stakeholders, and
- completing an orderly standdown of response activities.

Why was it decided that eradication was no longer feasible?

The technical, biological and epidemiological factors include but are not limited to:

- Evidence pointing to the fact that the current outbreak is most likely a carry-over from the previous outbreak, though there may be other factors.
- The pathogen is challenging to detect and delimit due its cryptic nature and long disease incubation and latency period.

This is compounded by gaps in scientific knowledge about the disease life cycle and pathways of spread.

What does official control mean?

On occasions, an exotic plant pest or disease may enter Australia that cannot be eradicated. If this happens, the pest or disease is managed by industry and the government of the state or territory in which it occurs.

When 'official control' is applied, the state or territory government puts in place measures to contain and control the pest or disease. These mandatory activities include:

- containment or suppression activities (mostly involves destruction, disposal and decontamination)
- surveillance in the area where the pest or disease could establish
- movement restrictions so the pest or disease does not spread to an area that is not affected.

Official control can be applied at a regional level. In this case, it would apply at the Territory borders so that the rest of Australia will be absent of freckle.

Response funding

The banana industry has provided significant financial support to the eradication response through levies, contributing just under 50 per cent of the response funding.

Further information

All parties involved in decisions regarding banana freckle in Australia acknowledge the dedicated and ongoing efforts of the NT Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (NT DAF), affected industries, and the local community in managing the incursion. Thanks to these efforts, all known infected banana plants have now been removed. During the transition to management phase, NT DAF will continue to monitor for banana freckle.

WHAT IS BANANA FRECKLE?

Banana Freckle (Phyllosticta cavendishii) is a serious fungal disease affecting banana plants and fruit. The most characteristic symptom of freckle are dark raised spots and a sandpaper feel to infected (spotted) leaves and fruit. The fruit is still safe to eat.

More information can be found on the Australian Banana Growers' Council website and via Plant Health Australia (PHA). Scan the QR code to read the PHA fact sheet.

If you see any freckle like symptoms on bananas, report it to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881 immediately.

Please contact ABGC with any further questions: info@abgc.org.au

CONVERSATIONS AT CONGRESS

The Grower Support (Biosecurity) team made their presence felt at the 2025 Australian Banana Industry Congress, held 6–8 August at the RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast.

The program's booth showcased rolling informative videos, updated Grower Kits and created a welcoming space for conversation. A Guess the Banana Weight competition proved to be a fun icebreaker - congratulations to winner Maeve Lowe, who took the win with a guess of 17.9kg. Surveys to gauge awareness of TR4, biosecurity and the GS (Bio) team's role were also a hit, with Michael Russo, Miki Buchanan and Blaise Cini taking home randomly-drawn prizes for sharing their thoughts.

It wasn't just about competitions - conversations flowed easily, often starting with the chance to win a Yeti drink bottle and quickly turning into discussions about biosecurity, industry challenges and on-farm solutions.

Across the three days, there was a strong focus on TR4 and biosecurity, with several expert speakers sharing insights, updates and inspiration. Among them was keynote speaker Professor Altus Viljoen from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, whose global experience tackling Fusarium wilt TR4 gave growers fresh perspectives and practical ideas. His clear explanations of integrated disease management, backed by real-world examples, struck a chord with the audience and helped spark further conversations at the Grower Support (Biosecurity) booth.

A big thank you to our team who kept the show running in FNQ with surveillance still being carried out on farms during this time.

SUPPORTING GROWERS, STRENGTHENING BIOSECURITY

Since the detection of Panama disease tropical race 4 (TR4) in Tully in 2015, the Australian banana industry has been working hard to keep the disease contained and raise awareness around the importance of on-farm biosecurity.

TR4 is a serious soil-borne disease that kills banana plants and, if left unmanaged, could have devastating consequences for our industry.

To help meet this challenge, the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) manages the disease in Queensland on behalf of industry, through the Grower Support (Biosecurity) Program. ABGC took responsibility for managing TR4 from Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) in July 2023, following a transition period.

At the heart of this program is a simple goal: to support growers and protect the future of Australian bananas.

What does the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team do?

The program is built around practical, grower-focused support. It's about helping growers navigate biosecurity challenges with the right information, tools and support at the right time.

Key areas of support include:

- Guidance and reassurance during times of uncertainty, including if a sample is taken from your farm
- Surveillance for TR4: ABGC's Field Officers conduct surveillance in the Northern Banana Biosecurity Zone (basically, Far North Queensland)
- Personalised support to help minimise disruptions to your business in the case of a positive detection
- Clear advice on how to meet biosecurity standards and maintain operations
- Industry-led resources and services, providing a strong, coordinated approach to TR4 management that meets grower needs

A trusted point of contact for growers

At the time of going to print, the team are working on recruiting a Grower Support and Engagement Officer to work with growers and ensure farming businesses have the tools they need to make confident decisions when it comes to managing TR4. The role will include gathering grower feedback and identifying challenges on the ground. With the broader GS (Biosecurity) team, they will ensure grower views are represented when policies are being updated for developed.

Why This Matters to You

The Grower Support (Biosecurity) program is one part of a bigger picture that includes research and policy happening here in Australia and right across the globe. But most importantly, it's about people helping people - working together to keep banana growing strong for generations to come.

If you're a grower with questions about on-farm biosecurity or what happens during a TR4 detection, the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team is here for you.

HANDS-ON REFRESHER FOR FIELD OFFICERS

Glenn Johns, Communications & Engagement Officer, Grower Support (Biosecurity)

On-farm biosecurity is a grower's best defence against pest and disease threats, including Panama TR4.

In Far North Queensland, to support management of the disease, trained field officers (FOs) are on the ground working towards industry-set surveillance targets.

FOs are part of the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team with the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC), with surveillance forming part of an overall TR4 Disease Management Plan. The officers' job is to keep a close eye out for signs of the disease - and they do it with the backing of ongoing, hands-on training that ensures their methods remain current, consistent and grounded in the latest science.

Always Learning, Always Improving

ABGC's FOs recently put their sampling skills to the test with some hands-on training at the South Johnstone Research Station.

The officers already know the strict processes involved when dealing with suspect plants, but getting the chance to practice them in the field (where no disease is present) was a valuable exercise. They treated the session just like a real farm visit — from following best-practice biosecurity when entering the property, through to correctly bagging and labelling the 'sample'.

"There's a big focus on making sure we're not just out there doing the job - we're doing it right," Elisha Farmer, Grower Support (Biosecurity) program manager, said.

Surveillance that's thorough, science-backed and grower-focussed

When the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team visits a banana farm, they're conducting visual surveillance to look for signs of TR4. About 80% of plants are inspected across each property - and when a farm is newly planted or still developing, the team focuses on perimeter zones, where risks can be higher.

The surveillance strategy is based on extensive research. Field officers prioritise properties located within a buffer zone, which extends 38km from known TR4 detections in Tully. The zone was determined by factors like water flow, soil movement, and machinery use - all of which can increase the chance of disease spread.

It's a targeted, strategic approach designed to make the most of time, resources and on-the-ground knowledge. Visit www.abgcgrowersupport.com.au to learn more about the strategy.

What This Means for Growers

While Field Officers don't train growers directly or walk farms alongside them during surveillance, they're always just a phone call away. If you ever have questions about TR4 symptoms, farm biosecurity, or want to know more about the surveillance process, please don't hesitate to reach out.

"It's not just about detecting TR4," Elisha said. "It's about backing growers with consistent surveillance and reliable, science-based support - so they can focus on growing."

A member of the ABGC team will contact you to arrange a suitable time, and answer any questions, before surveillance occurs on your property.

A big thank you to the team at DPI for welcoming us to South Johnstone Research Station for the recent refresher, helping us make sure these important protocols stay effective and practical for the field.

More information:
Elisha Farmer
Grower Support (Biosecurity)
Program Manager: 0477 643 585 | growersupport@abgc.org.au
www.abgcgrowersupport.com.au

INVESTIGATING ALTERNATE CROPS FOR PROPERTIES WITH TR4

The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) has been working with growers, scientists and biosecurity experts to explore the possibility of growing other crops on land affected by Panama disease tropical race 4 – without putting the rest of industry at increased risk.

It's now been a decade since the disease was first detected in Tully, and Australia's success in slowing its spread has been recognised across the globe. This is due to the commitment of growers affected, with support from industry and government.

Acknowledging this, and at the request of industry, ABGC has been investigating opportunities for land that has largely been locked down after a detection. In the first instance, the thorough risk assessment and mitigation process has focussed on the background risk of spread (like water or feral pigs) and the request to grow cane. There has also been consultation across a broad cross-section of the banana industry.

To find out more about this process, you can view the 'Frequently Asked Questions' via www.abgcgrowersupport.com.au

Going forward, it's important to note that this process will be a case-by-case and involve mitigation measures that are specific to farms and operational practices.

As always, your best defence against Panama TR4 and a range of other pests and diseases, is strong biosecurity on your own property.

ABGC MAINTAINS ITS COMMITMENT TO BUNCHY TOP CONTAINMENT AND CONTROL, AND PEST MANAGEMENT IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

In March 2025, the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) proudly wrapped up the Hort Innovation-funded project '*Multi-pest surveillance and grower education to manage banana pests and diseases*' (BA21003). Running since July 2022, this three-year initiative delivered vital surveillance and education to help protect the industry from major biosecurity threats.

BA21003 outcomes

The project ensured the containment of Banana Bunchy Top Disease (BBTD) within containment zones in New South Wales (NSW) and South East Queensland (SEQ). It reduced the incidence of BBTD in NSW from 2590 infected plants in 2021/22 to 1288 infected plants in 2024/25, and the incidence of BBTD in SEQ from 1447 infected plants in 2021/22 to 140 infected plants in 2024/25. It also ensured a high level of compliance with industry standards for leaf spot control and biosecurity preparedness in North Queensland. A complete report on the outcomes of the BA21003 project is now available on the Hort Innovation website.

BUNCHY TOP INCIDENCE DECREASES 21/22 to 24/25

NSW: 2,590 → 1,288
= 50.3% decrease

SEQ: 1,447 → 140
= 90.3% decrease

The new project – BA24003

A new 3 year project funded by Hort Innovation (BA24003) commenced on 1 April 2025. Consistent with its predecessor project, the new project incorporates activities dealing with BBTD containment, grower education in NSW and SEQ, and the management of banana pests and diseases in NQ. It also continues to focus on industry capability building and grower resource development while still conducting routine inspection, surveillance, and control activities. Project activities are aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness, and maximizing value for money, to respond to BBTD infection, spread and control and to protect the NQ industry against other significant banana disease related production constraints.

In addition, the new Project will also deliver:

- A report (including recommendations) on the feasibility of conducting targeted surveillance of commercial properties outside of existing containment zones (to be delivered at MS102 on 26 September 2025);
- A report provided to Hort Innovation based on research taken outlining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to direct engagement with retail nurseries (to be delivered at MS103 on 26 March 2026); and
- Preparedness workshops to consider new incursion will be conducted annually including growers, biosecurity authorities, ABGC Biosecurity staff and consultants where relevant.

Project objectives

- Enhance disease management capabilities
- Strengthen grower engagement and education
- Foster industry resilience and preparedness
- Expand and diversify surveillance strategies

Project outcomes

- Improved containment of BBTD by improving grower and industry knowledge of surveillance methods
- Strengthened grower and public engagement and understanding of biosecurity best practices and proactive pest management in NQ and SEQ and NSW.
- Improved industry preparedness for potential disease outbreaks beyond containment zones.

STAFF CHANGES

After many decades of service to the banana industry, NSW Team Leader Wayne Shoobridge has announced his retirement. Wayne will be sorely missed, however the Project is happy to announce Oscar Shooter as a new trainee inspector in NSW.

Oscar has had previous experience working on banana farms and is very enthusiastic about his new position with the team – he has proven to have a good eye at spotting BBTD infected plants.

Kick-start your biosecurity for under $1000

HABIT CHANGE
$0

STAFF AWARENESS
$0 Get your staff together regularly to ensure they are aware of your on-farm biosecurity practices and what they need to look out for in the paddock.

ZONING
Divide your farm with physical barriers. To check the zoning will suit your farming operations, implement temporary barriers with flagging tape or roadside bunting etc before implementing more permanent structures such as brick walls and fencing.

$150

FOOTBATH
Heavy duty plastic containers can be used as a temporary footbath while you plan to implement something more permanent. Test strips are available to test to check the concentration of the disinfectant.

$100

BIOSECURITY SIGN
Install signs that list your current phone number.

$80

BOOTS
Purchase footwear that stays on farm.

10 pairs at $40 = **$400**

DISINFECTANT & SPRAYER
Disinfectant and sprayer – Use effective disinfectant (e.g. Steri-maX®, Bactex®CF, Agriquat). Ensure you disinfect AFTER you have cleaned off any dirt or debris.

$250

Queensland Government

Australian Banana Growers' Council Grower Support BIOSECURITY

Hort Innovation BANANA FUND

Total: $980

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Banana farming is continuing to change in the Wet Tropics and it's a win-win situation. It's helping farmers and the land. In the longer-term, it's also helping the Great Barrier Reef. We speak to Steve Morice from ABC Bananas.

Removing rows of bananas is never something a grower wants to do. But the toughest decisions often lead to the best results - and that's proven to be the case for ABC Bananas when it comes to its mosaic of farms in the Innisfail district. Steve Morice, who is the general manager, says erosion was worsening on some of the headlands and in paddocks.

WET SEASON EROSION

"In the wet season, water was running over the top of a hill so fast it was eating away the headland that we were driving along below, and causing issues at the steep ends of the banana rows," he says. "We went to a workshop on soils with the Australian Banana Growers' Council and they were offering to help farmers with paddock layout issues and nutrient management plans. "I was a bit hesitant at first because I knew we'd probably need to knock out some bananas to solve the problem. But we gained so much from the changes that we made."

Wet season erosion.

HELP AT HAND

Steve and farm manager Stephen Prior received financial help from the Banana BMP's Best Practice Fund, which supports projects reducing nutrient, pesticide and sediment runoff. The headland was moved to a higher point, the rows were shortened by taking bananas out of the steep sections, and the old road became a drain.

SPOON DRAINS TO SLOW WATER

On another farm, an in-paddock spoon drain was built to slow water and avoid washouts, and a concrete structure was added to stabilise a headland and prevent more erosion. "It was a win for everything," Steve says. "We lost about three acres of bananas but we've gained in efficiencies - tractors not getting bogged anymore and bunches not falling off trailers. "And the soil isn't washing away like it was. There is grass all through the spoon drain now. "We're looking at more spoon drains. Vegetation is holding the land together." The two Steves also worked with a Banana BMP extension officer on a nutrient management plan for their farms. The free planning covers everything from farm mapping and record-keeping to setting targets for nutrient application that are specific to each farm and its needs. It includes soil and leaf-testing with farmers.

"Now we are looking at ways to unlock the phosphorus which is naturally high in our soils, so that we don't need to add as much, and at reducing nitrogen application at certain times of year.

"It's rewarding to see benefits. You could bury your head in the sand and keep doing what you've always done, or you can move forward."

Before.

During.

After.

Original story supplied by Terrain NRM

The Banana BMP and the Best Management Practice Fund is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by the Australian Banana Growers Council. Development of nutrient management plans has been funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation through the Cassowary Coast Reef Smart Farming Project.

Queensland Government

Banana BMP
#BananaBestPracticePaysOff

BEST PRACTICE FUND

APPLY NOW

Delivered by ABGC to support growers to achieve productivity & environmental stewardship
Funded by the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program
for improved water quality outcomes

The Best Practice Fund supports projects that reduce nutrient, pesticide and sediment runoff from banana farms in Great Barrier Reef catchments. The Fund contributes up to 50% of the total project cost, to a maximum of $30,000 (excl GST).

Applications for the final round of funding are open now and close in early October.

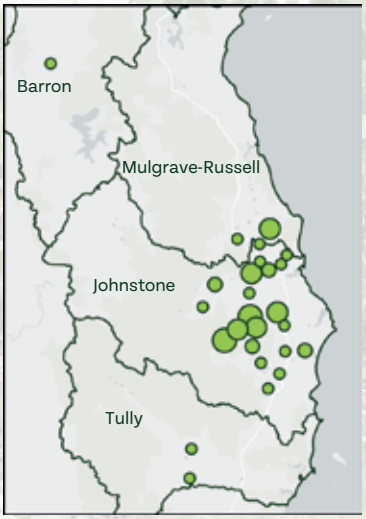
bmp@abgc.org.au
0457 924 518

48 growers

improving practices on

2,414 ha

of banana farms in Great Barrier Reef catchments



$2.15 million
invested on farm

$0.99M from the Fund

$1.16M from growers

26 upgraded spreaders

19 erosion and sediment control projects

14 side-throw slashers

7 fertigation systems

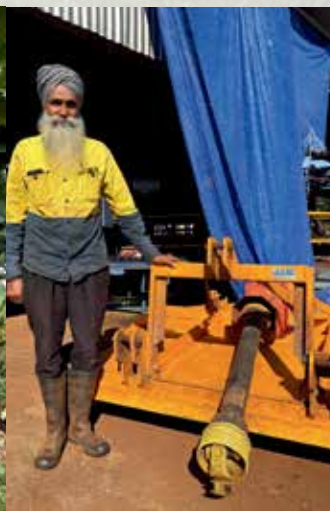
2 innovative nutrient projects

2 equipment & machinery for permanent beds

The Banana BMP's Best Practice Fund is funded under the Banana Best Management Practice (BMP) Project (2023-2026). The Banana BMP is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered by Australian Banana Growers' Council in partnership with growers.

Australian Banana Growers

Queensland Government



UNDERSTANDING BANANA CONSUMERS: INSIGHTS FROM HORT IQ

Andrew Burns, Supply Chain Engagement Manager, ABGC

In today's rapidly evolving consumer landscape, access to robust insights from trusted sources is invaluable. These insights help us better understand the markets we operate in, how consumers perceive our products, and the trends shaping their purchasing decisions.

This information is now easier to access than ever through the Hort IQ platform, a central hub for consumer and retail data tailored specifically to Australian horticulture. Developed by Hort Innovation and powered by research partnerships with Nielsen IQ and Fiftyfive5, Hort IQ delivers interactive dashboards and digestible reports designed to help industry and growers make informed, strategic decisions.

Through Hort IQ, you can explore key areas such as consumer preferences, product perceptions, market trends, retail performance, and household demographics. Insights that are critical to understanding and responding to the horticulture landscape.

What information and reports are available?

Hort IQ offers a comprehensive suite of consumer and retailer insights accessible through easy-to-use dashboards and detailed reports. These include deep dives into areas such as usage and perception, retail and purchasing trends, and consumer needs within the Australianmarket.

The Banana Comprehensive Review 2025 report provides detailed analysis based on the most recent 52 weeks of data up to 23 March 2025, compared to the same time period in the previous year.

This information presents a clear view of how the banana category is performing across sales volumes, purchase frequency and market share.

Beyond overall category performance, this data highlights demographic differences and key consumer motivations. These insights enable growers, marketers and supply chain partners to tailor their strategies to evolving consumer preferences and maximise growth opportunities.

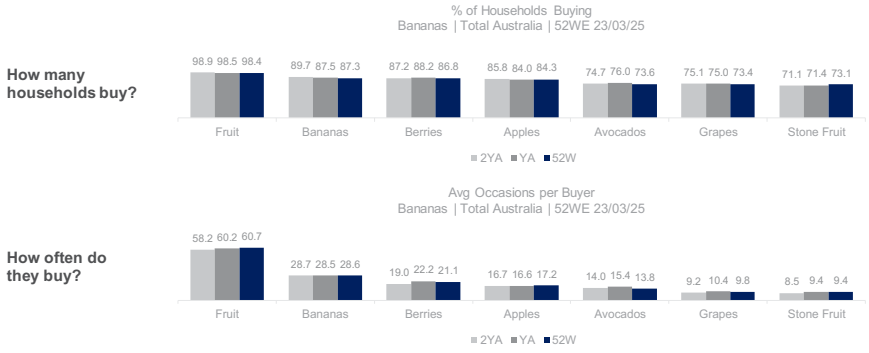
On the right is a sample selection of the types of reports available through the Banana Comprehensive Review 2025 providing a snapshot of the powerful data available.

How to access Hort IQ

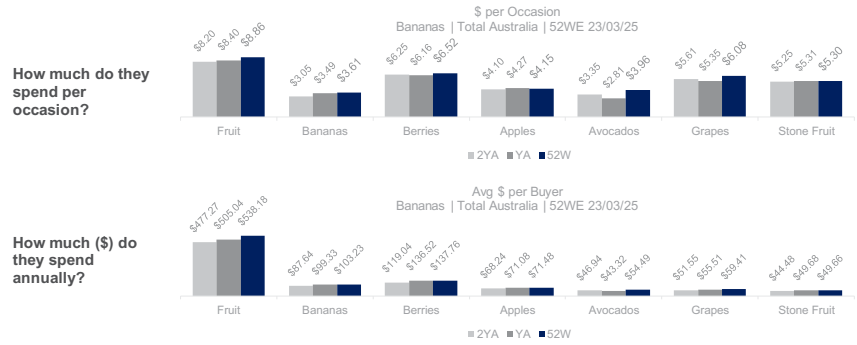
Visit www.hortiq.com.au and register your details to request access. Once inside, you'll gain valuable insights specific to the Banana category and broader horticulture trends.

A portion of this data is drawn from Nielsen Homescan®, which captures household purchasing behaviour across Australia, offering powerful visibility into who is buying Bananas, how often, and in what quantities.

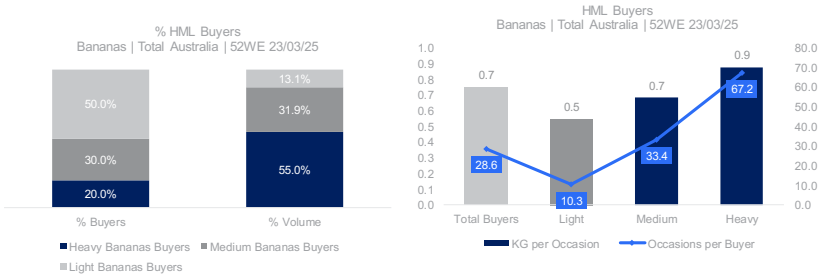
While behind that of two years ago, Bananas household reach and frequency levels hold this year, with an average of 28.6 occasions, per household.



In line with higher prices, shoppers are spending more on Bananas each occasion, and annually, this year.



1 in 2 Banana buyers only represent 13% of kilogram sales – there remains an opportunity to drive frequency of purchase amongst these 'light' buyers.



"MAKE YOUR BODY SING"
CAMPAIGN CONTINUES TO DRIVE RESULTS

The Australian Bananas 'Make Your Body Sing' campaign continues to deliver strong results – keeping bananas top of mind and driving household purchases across the nation.

With bold, unmistakable yellow branding and a catchy jingle, the campaign has been active across TV, radio, YouTube, social media, out-of-home (OOH), and online retail, reaching Australians wherever they are, whether scrolling, shopping, or streaming.

Centred on the message that bananas are the ultimate natural fuel for an active lifestyle, the campaign reinforces the brand promise to 'make your body sing' through dynamic visuals cleverly linking bananas with a range of sporting moments. Developed with input from growers via the Banana Marketing Strategic Advisory Panel, the campaign aligns with Pillar 1 of the Banana Marketing Strategy (July 2024 to December 2025) which focuses on communicating the natural energy of Australian bananas broadly and frequently.

With strong industry alignment, the campaign is supporting our key goals: increasing purchase intent, boosting household penetration - particularly among light buyers - and growing the overall value of the fruit category.

Results so far

The latest campaign tracking data from Fiftyfive5 reveals that campaign messaging is not only reaching Australians at scale but also shifting perceptions, reflected by a 6 per cent increase in consumers that now view bananas as a natural energy snack. Purchase intent is up 3 per cent and positive associations have significantly strengthened: natural energy (+13 per cent), healthy (+12 percent), easy to eat (+ 11 per cent).

Campaign recall is strong with 22 per cent of surveyed consumers remembering it when prompted. Radio and TV are leading the way with 38 per cent and 34 per cent recall respectively. Leveraging the jingle's strong memory cues, radio ads aired from September to October 2024 and resumed in June 2025, reaching 3.55 million people and delivering over 21.3 million impressions. Television has driven mass reach and engagement, with 15- and 30-second ads airing across Channels 7, 9 and 10 during high-profile programs between 23 February and 29 March 2025, reaching 5.3 million people.

Digital channels are also performing strongly. Non-skippable YouTube ads reached 2.58 million people and generated 9.01 million impressions between January and May 2024, exceeding KPIs with five months of activity still to go. Retail out-of-home advertising has delivered an estimated 133 million impression between February and March 2025, acting as a final prompt near the point of purchase and remaining in market through September.

The distinctive yellow creative, featuring dynamic sporting visuals is resonating well. Twenty-six per cent of surveyed consumers linked the ads with the message that bananas are a smart energy choice, and 74 per cent agreed the messaging is easy to understand - reinforcing the strength of the campaign's creative and media strategy.

With one in ten Australians now shopping for groceries online, the campaign's presence on Coles and Woolworths digital shelves has driven increases in weekly banana sales, new customers, and average spend compared to the same period last year.

Social media has played a key role in extending reach and engagement, with content across Meta and TikTok generating over 45 million impressions and reaching 9.1 million consumers between July 2024 and July 2025. Creator content has been

central to this success, with brand ambassador Billy Slater driving strong engagement through lifestyle-focused posts, and additional content from Thomas Flegler, NRL Dolphins player and proud QLD banana grower, helping boost brand exposure and connecting with a broader audience.

What's to come

With momentum continuing to build, the campaign will stay active across key channels through to the end of the year. YouTube, social media advertising, broadcast radio and streaming podcasts will reinforce the energy message until November, keeping bananas top of mind across high-reach platforms. From August to October, the campaign will also maintain a strong presence in retail environments, with out-of-home placements and online media across Coles and Woolworths online shopping. These touchpoints will serve as timely prompts for shoppers - both in-store and online - at the point of purchase.

FRUIT SALAD - YUMMY, YUMMY!

WIGGLES PARTNER UP TO ENCOURAGE KIDS TO EAT FRUIT & VEG

Australia's fresh produce industry has teamed up with beloved children's entertainers, The Wiggles, in a national campaign to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables.

Launched at Hort Connections by the International Fresh Produce Association Australia and New Zealand (IFPA ANZ), the campaign is being rolled out across digital, social, at concerts and through colourful resources to promote fruit and vegetables in an age-appropriate, educational and positive way.

It comes as new research reveals that while two-thirds of Aussie parents say it's very important that their children eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables, less than half say that fruit and vegetables actually make up most of their child's snacks.

The research, conducted by IFPA ANZ in seven countries, also found Australian parents are less likely than international parents to think it's very important that children eat the recommended daily amount of fruit and vegetables.

Supported by Hort Innovation, the campaign titled, "Fruit and Veggies Yummy Yummy," aims to be joyful and energetic and inspire a life-long love of fruit and vegetables among children.

Original Blue Wiggle Anthony Field said the collaboration was a natural fit, given The Wiggles' longstanding relationship with Australia's fruit and vegetable industry with their iconic songs for children that celebrate fresh food.

"We're so excited to be part of this campaign and to support the mission of helping children eat more fruit and vegetables. With more than 30 years of singing songs like 'Fruit Salad Yummy Yummy' and 'Hot Potato', this partnership takes our commitment even further, really showing children just how fun and delicious healthy eating can be."

Funding partners for the campaign are Hort Innovation, International Fresh Produce Association Australia and New Zealand, AUSVEG, Perfection Fresh, Flavorite, Mitolo Family Farms and banana growers Premier Fresh and MacKays Marketing.

The campaign was launched at Hort Connections amidst a sea of colour.

SYDNEY SIDERS GO BANANAS AT THE ROYAL EASTER SHOW

Australian Bananas had a strong presence at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show (SRES), with a vibrant stand right in the heart of the action.

Held over the twelve days, the show welcomed a record-breaking 850,000 attendees – and the Australian Bananas activation did not go unnoticed.

Located in the centre of the Woolworths Fresh Food Dome, the brand-new stand drew incredible attention. Conservative estimates indicate that at least 637,500 people – three in every four showgoers - were directly exposed to the stand and activation.

Recent campaign tracking confirms the positive impact of the activation, which left a lasting impression: one in ten people in NSW attended the Easter Show, with half noticing the banana stand and a third stopping to visit it.

Visitors enjoyed over 73,000 delicious banana samples, including banana pieces, yogurt and oat bowls, and smoothies – a 60 per cent increase in samples when compared to previous similar-sized activations.

Growers front and centre

A highlight of this year's activation was the meaningful involvement of industry members, with growers and suppliers generously volunteering their time to help run the stand. Their presence brought the industry to life for attendees as they handed out samples and engaged directly with visitors – sharing insights into the banana growing process and answering questions about the industry.

A huge thankyou to:

- Andrew and Anthony Serra - *Serra Faming*
- Catherine Lowe and her daughter Maeve Lowe - *S Lowe and Sons*
- Miki Buchanan - *Nourish Banana Co*
- Rosa Arcella-Downie plus her Father Patrick Arcella, and daughter Messina Downie - *Tropicana Bananas*

Industry involvement pays off

Consumer insights were collected at the stand via a short QR code survey, incentivised with a daily Ninja Nutri Blender giveaway. From 2,425 responses:

- 96 per cent of visitors were very satisfied with the overall stand experience
- 94 per cent were very likely to purchase bananas after the experience

Educational focus

Alongside our core message promoting the delicious natural energy of Australian Bananas, the stand also featured educational content for Australians of all ages. A key moment was the launch of the new video Anna Goes Bananas: Farm to Table, starring Dolphins player Thomas Flegler who comes from a banana farming family in Far North Queensland.

For those who missed out on the event, a short video reel can be found on the Australian Bananas YouTube page, "Bananas on Show".

Australian Bananas at EKKA 2025!

Following the success of the SRES activation, the Marketing Strategic Investment Advisory Panel endorsed taking the Australian Bananas stand to Queensland's largest and most loved annual event - the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) - which ran from 9 to 17 August 2025.

Drawing on valuable insights from Sydney, especially the powerful impact of grower involvement, the Australian Bananas delivered an engaging and memorable experience at Ekka. This year's activation featured:

- **Banana sampling** – including smoothies, banana pieces, and bananas with oats and yoghurt
- **Grower interactions** – giving visitors the opportunity to meet and chat with real banana growers
- **Learning Trail** – the stand featured in the Ekka Learning Trail Passport and Teacher's Guide, offering an educational experience for school groups. See: https://www.ekka.com.au/education/ekka-learning-trail/
- **Farm-to-plate video** – an engaging visual journey showing how bananas are grown, tailored for children
- **Smoothie bikes** – where visitors pedalled to blend their own banana smoothies
- Banana bunch guessing game – visitors guessed the number of bananas in a bunch to win a prize
- **Banana temporary tattoos for kids** – available at the stand on weekends and handed out during the week
- **Merchandise giveaways** – fun, branded items to take home

The Australian Bananas team was proud to bring the brand to life once again and engage with the 400,000 visitors who attend this iconic Queensland event.

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY HABITS EARLY THROUGH EDUCATION

To reinforce habitual banana consumption from a young age, marketing efforts have also focused on targeting students through Life Education's national Healthy Harold program.

Bananas were promoted as a healthy snack (and Harold's favourite food), with students receiving tailored, nutrition-focused messaging.

From July 2024 to April 2025, the campaign reached over 350,000 students across more than 3,200 primary schools, with 117,000 students receiving banana-specific educational content. Events such as Go Bananas Day helped further amplify the message, with 7,300 students attending and a reach of over 11,000 on social media.

The campaign has had strong impact:

- 92 per cent of surveyed students agreed bananas are a healthy snack to include in a school lunch.
- 69 per cent said they felt more excited to eat bananas after hearing from Harold and the Life Ed educator.
- 96 per cent said bananas are Healthy Harold's favourite food, showing the messaging got through.

NRL star Thomas Flegler stars in an educational video with 'Anna'.

Recent highlights

As part of the ongoing partnership with Life Ed, Australian Bananas supported Healthy Harold's Moree Festival of Health—a new regional initiative aimed at promoting positive health outcomes for students and families in the Moree area. Alongside Life Ed's regular education program delivered to all local students, festival events provided engaging community experiences designed to encourage healthy habits early on.

Banana sampling activities took place at:

- Tuesday, 5 August – *Healthy Harold Colour Run* (approx. 300 students)
- Wednesday, 6 August – *Healthy Harold Breakfast Club* (approx. 354 students)

At the Breakfast Club, students viewed the *Anna Banana's Farm* to Table video, which educated them on where bananas come from and helped build a stronger connection to the food they eat.

These initiatives mark another important step in fostering long-term banana consumption among the next generation of shoppers - one banana at a time.

Healthy Harold's Moree Festival of Health.

INNISFAIL SHOW AND PACKING COMPETITION

RESULTS

Class 1: Champion Ratoon Bunch
1st Nourish Bananas (Seabreeze)
2nd ABC – Sellars Bananas

Class 2: Champion Plant Bunch
1st Superfood Farming
2nd J. Dickinson

Class 3: Heaviest Ratoon Bunch
1st Nourish Bananas (Seabreeze)
2nd Musa Golden Bananas

Class 4: Heaviest Plant Bunch
1st M.D.M Nucifora
2nd Nourish Bananas (Seabreeze)

Class 5: Best Two Ratoon Bunches
1st Nourish Bananas (Seabreeze)
2nd ABC – Sellars Bananas

Class 6: Best Two Plant Bunches
1st Superfood Farming
2nd J & R Dickinson

Class 7: Champion Carton of Hands, Ex Large
1st J & R Dickinson
2nd J & R Dickinson

Encouragement Award
M & G Dunne

Class 8: Champion Cluster Carton Extra Large 13kg in 6 per layer carton only
1st ABC – Sellars Bananas
2nd J & R Dickinson

Encouragement Award
J & R Dickinson

Class 9: Champion Cluster Carton Large 15 kg in 6 per layer carton only
1st M & B Zucchinati & Co
2nd Mengotti Pty Ltd

Encouragement Award
ABC – Sellars Bananas

Class 10: Best three (3) Clusters
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd M & B Zucchinati & Co

Class 11: Champion Hand
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd ABC – Sellars Bananas

Class 12: Heaviest Hand
1st M & B Zucchinati & Co
2nd Di Carlo Bananas

Class 13: Champion Pair of Hands
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd J & R Dickinson

Class 14: Heaviest Banana (Any Variety, can be Freak)
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd Hardings Farming

Class 15: Best Carton of Ex Large Hands - Any Other Variety
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd Hardings Farming

Class 16: Open Heaviest Ratoon Bunch
1st Musa Golden Bananas

Class 17: CHAMPION LADY FINGER BUNCH
1st Di Carlo Bananas
2nd Hardings Farming

Class 18: Most Successful Exhibition on Aggregate Points
1st Di Carlo Bananas

Most Outstanding Exhibit
M & B Zucchinati & Co


GO ABC!
GO GO GO!!!
VAN-POWER
VAN-SUPER
#1


Australian Banana Packing Championship

2025 TULLY SHOW

RESULTS

1. Champion Bunch
1st Jarra Bend
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas

2. Champion Plant Bunch
1st Flegler Group
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas

3. Heaviest Bunch
1st Serra Farming
2nd Jarra Bend

4. Heaviest Plant Bunch
1st Flegler Group
2nd JR & V Dickinson

5. Champion Lady Finger Bunch
1st Harding Farming
2nd DiCarlo's Bananas

6. Champion 12kg Lady Finger Carton
1st Harding Farming
2nd DiCarlo's Bananas

7. Champion Pair Ratoon Bunches
1st Crema Bananas
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas

8. Champion Pair of Plant Bunches
1st ABC Sellars Bananas
2nd Mackays South Davison

9. Champion Carton Extra Large / Hands (Open)
1st M & G Dunne
2nd JR & V Dickinson

10. Champion Cluster Large Carton
1st ABC Sellars Bananas
2nd JR & V Dickinson

11. Champion Cluster Carton 13kg
1st Jarra Bend
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas

12. Champion Cluster Carton 15kg
1st MnB Zecchinati
2nd Jarra Bend

13. Champion Hand
1st Jarra Bend
2nd MnB Zecchinati

14. Champion Pair of Hands
1st MnB Zecchinati
2nd Flegler Group

15. Heaviest Hand
1st Jarra Bend
2nd MnB Zecchinati

16. Best 6 Singles
1st Jarra Bend
2nd Flegler Group

17. Heaviest Single
1st MnB Zecchinati
2nd JR & V Dickinson

18. Heaviest Freak
1st Mackays Bananas Bolinda
2nd Serra Farming

19. Best 3 Clusters
1st MnB Zecchinati
2nd Mackays Bananas Mullins Rd

20. Open Heaviest Bunch
1st Serra Farming
2nd Jarra Bend

21. Open Heaviest Plant Bunch
1st JR & V Dickinson

22. Champion Carton (Tully District)
1st ABC Sellars Bananas
2nd Jarra Bend

23. Champion Bunch (Tully District)
1st Jarra Bend
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas

Most Successful Exhibitor
1st Jarra Bend
2nd ABC Sellars Bananas
3rd MnB Zecchinati

Steward's Choice
MnB Zecchinati


BANANAS
JARA BEND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Luna® EXPERIENCE

GROUP 7 3 FUNGICIDE

Control yellow Sigatoka, leaf speckle and cordana leaf spot with Luna® Experience fungicide.

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- The only Group 7 fungicide available in bananas
- Non-treated surface protection through translaminar movement
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