

SURVEILLANCE FOR PANAMA TR4

Panama TR4 has had a devastating impact on industries and livelihoods in other banana growing countries. If the disease is not managed, it has the potential to do the same in Far North Queensland.



Why is surveillance important?

Panama TR4 is a soil-borne disease that kills banana plants. Early detection, rapid destruction and on-farm restrictions are the only way to control and contain the disease. This is why surveillance remains a key priority for ABGC Grower Support (Biosecurity).

Best practice, always.

ABGC's Field Officers are fully trained and committed to implementing industry best practice in their own biosecurity measures. The team follows strict cleaning and decontamination protocols to ensure they do not contribute to the spread of any diseases. They will comply with all reasonable on-farm biosecurity measures.



The fine print

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, ABGC's Authorised Officers are authorised by the Chief Executive to:

- determine the presence and extent of Panama TR4 within Queensland
- monitor compliance with the Act.

Authorised Officers can enter properties to undertake activities which include, but are not limited to:

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

A quick note

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

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WHAT TO EXPECT SURVEILLANCE

Before surveillance takes place, a Grower Support (Biosecurity) team member will call a grower to discuss plans and arrange a suitable time.

What can a grower expect to gain from this call?

The representative will discuss a typical day for Field Officers when on farm, what our intentions are and confirm property details are accurate on our database (for example, property address, best contact person on site and any additional biosecurity hazards).

On arrival

The team will contact the grower/site contact with an estimated time of arrival on the day of surveillance. Upon arrival, the team will complete the entry decontamination procedure and sign in to the visitor's log. Our site team will meet with the grower/site contact and review the property brief and request acknowledgment (Signature) of the Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) Entry Notice. The grower/site contact will be provided with the BQ Entry Notice for their records.

If signs are detected

If a plant with external signs consistent with the symptoms of Panama TR4 is found, the surveillance officers will flag the plant for further investigation and notify the grower/site contact of their findings. The plant will be cut to determine if there are also internal signs of the disease. Upon inspection of the incision, if the plant looks to be symptomatic, samples of the plant will be taken for laboratory testing.

Conducting surveillance

The team will assess the terrain, weather conditions and growth of the crops to determine the best approach to carry out surveillance on the day. Typically, the team will walk every 4th row of the banana farm, looking for any signs or symptoms of Panama TR4.

Your plant samples

All samples taken from the property will be clearly labelled and securely packaged. The sample/s will be sent to a specialised laboratory in Brisbane with a secure chain of custody. Results from testing a sample may take up to 8 weeks to be produced. Once the sample results are received, a representative from the Grower Support (Biosecurity) team will contact the grower to discuss the results and next steps.



If you see any signs of disease please contact Biosecurity Queensland immediately on 13 25 23.

Panama TR4 is classified as Category 1 restricted matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, and it is a legal requirement to report any suspected cases within 24 hours.

Do not cut or remove the plant. Disturbing the plant can trigger the release of fungal spores and may compromise the collection of a suitable sample for diagnostic testing.

Biosecurity obligations

Everyone has a General Biosecurity Obligation (GBO) to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of Panama TR4. This means immediately implementing containment actions when a suspect plant is identified and immediate isolation/zoning. The suspect plant and immediate surrounding area (often referred to as the "sampling zone") must be:

- **Clearly marked and physically isolated.**
- **Restricted from access by people, vehicles, machinery or tools and, if entry is necessary, it should be documented or logged.**

It is an offence to breach your GBO.

Monitoring your plants

Growers are strongly encouraged to conduct their own surveillance in addition to the monitoring carried out by the Grower Support (Biosecurity) Program.

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