

Australian authorities have confirmed the presence of Panama disease Tropical Race 4 (TR4) on a third Tully Valley farm, three years after it was first detected in the state of Queensland.



The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) was advised by Biosecurity Queensland that a vegetative compatibility group test (biological test) has conclusively confirmed the presence of the disease in samples taken from the farm.

The grower was issued a TR4 notice on Jan. 23 after a suspect plant was found during routine surveillance.

Since then, the grower has worked closely with authorities and successfully complied with all their requirements. They resumed trading on Jan. 27, just four days after the notice was given.

ABGC Chair Stephen Lowe praised the grower for their ongoing efforts at this difficult time.

“Obviously the confirmation of Panama TR4 on a third North Queensland banana farm is disappointing for the industry, and particularly for the grower concerned,” he said.

“But we know our growers are incredibly resilient and willing to help each other out in tough times. We’ve been preparing for the challenge of Panama TR4 and I’d urge all growers to ensure they have effective biosecurity measures in place.”

Measures such as implementing a footbath or footwear exchange, excluding unnecessary vehicle movement and managing plant material can go a long way in the fight against TR4.

Those living in or traveling to the region are asked to be mindful of quarantine areas and to stay out of all banana farms unless invited by the grower.

Panama TR4 was first detected in the Tully Valley in March 2015.

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