

Peruvian authorities say they have detected a possible case of Fusarium wilt tropical race IV (TR4), the highly contagious soil-borne fungus that has devastated banana plantations around the world.

If confirmed, Peru would be the second country in Latin America to detect TR4, after a [positive detection in Colombia](#) in July 2019. It would also spell trouble for the world's biggest banana-exporting region. Ecuador - which lies between Peru and Colombia - and Central American countries have not yet detected the disease.

The country's phytosanitary watchdog Senasa said in a statement published on Twitter that it had detected a possible case of the fungus on a 0.5ha field in Sullana, in the northern region of Piura.

The country has therefore activated its preventative action plan that has been developed in response to a possible phytosanitary emergency.

"As a preventive measure, precise phytosanitary actions have been adopted in the sector and peripheral areas, which will prevent the spread of the quarantined disease, if it is confirmed," Senasa said.

It added that a phytosanitary alert has been initiated at the national level to protect all areas of banana and plantain production.

Senasa said that it has sent field samples have been sent for analysis to its Plant Health Diagnostic Centres, where four different testing methods will be used. The results are expected over the coming days, it said.

The banana industry in neighboring Ecuador - the world's largest banana exporter - is also on high alert following the development. Ecuador's Agrocalidad asked exporters and producers of the fruit to strengthen measures designed to prevent the fungus' entry into the country.