

Notes from the Board

In 2021, the Panama TR4 Program Management Board (Board) commissioned three research projects into Panama TR4. The intention of undertaking this work is to offer the banana industry insights that will assist with future disease management. Updates relating to two of these projects are provided below, elongation factor (EF) sequencing and e-nose technology.

EF sequencing (also known as DNA sequencing) is being investigated to determine whether Panama TR4 can be identified using this technique. Initial findings are encouraging, with further samples to be tested. Additional funding has been approved to support this work.

E-nose technology is an electronic means of detecting odours given off by the fungus, *Fusarium odoratissimum*, or Panama TR4. It is being trialled as a potential viable tool for the early detection of the disease, using corm samples collected from Queensland and the Northern Territory. At this stage there has been no conclusive identification of fungal volatiles, however further avenues will be explored.

Transition to industry update

The Industry Transition Leader, Geoff Wilson, has commenced one-on-one and group meetings with growers to discuss the 'Panama TR4 Program Transition' paper. The common themes of feedback from growers were outlined to the Board, and more consultation with growers will take place this month. The Code of Practice (CoP) continues to progress with assistance from an external consultant. Once the content has been finalised, further consultation will occur with growers.

Technical Working Group update

The Technical Working Group (TWG) is made up of Panama TR4 Program and ABGC representatives, collaborating to resolve scientific and technical issues that are complex by nature. Advice from other experts may also be sought from time to time. The TWG have not met since the last Board meeting in December 2021. However a new Chair, Donna Campagnolo, Operations Manager for the Panama TR4 Program was appointed. Donna replaces outgoing Chair, Rhiannon Evans, Program Leader.

The Panama TR4 Program Management Board first convened in April 2020. This meeting formalised the joint industry and government partnership that has successfully managed Panama TR4 in Far North Queensland since 2015. The next Board meeting in June will mark 12 months to the current Program's cessation, with disease management being handed over from government to industry in July 2023. This will be a historic moment for both the Queensland government and Australian banana industry, and will ensure Queensland's banana production will continue despite the presence of Panama TR4.

General enquiries about this notice: Call Donna Campagnolo, Acting Program Leader on 07 4091 8144 or Sonia Campbell, ABGC on 0428 038 330

Grower enquiries to the Board: Call Jim Pekin on (07) 3278 4786

**Next
meeting
June
2022**

The Panama TR4 Program is a joint initiative between the Queensland Government and the Australian Banana Growers' Council.

**Panama
disease
tropical
race 4**

