

# Panama disease tropical race 4

## Check your plants for Panama TR4

Early detection through regular surveillance is the most effective way to protect banana farms from the spread of Panama disease tropical race 4 (TR4).

In addition to Biosecurity Queensland's surveillance program, growers who regularly check their own plants for signs of Panama TR4 may extend their farm viability through early detection and containment of the disease. Prompt reporting of plants with symptoms of Panama TR4 is a legal requirement under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

### Who should check your plants?

Your staff who are in paddocks on a regular basis are best placed to check for potential symptoms of Panama TR4. These can include:

- deleafers
- stringers
- baggers
- bell injectors
- any personnel that access the paddocks regularly.



## What to do if you find a suspect plant

**A suspect plant or plants should be immediately reported to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.**

If you find a suspect plant you should:

- 1 **Mark the plant with flagging tape or spray paint.**
- 2 **Record the location details of the plant (block, row etc), to help find it again. Or take a GPS location point.**
- 3 **If possible, take pictures to help with identification.**
- 4 **Limit access to the plant, for example cordon off an area around it.**
- 5 **Tell your supervisor or the property owner so they can call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.**



## What happens next?

Once notified, Biosecurity Queensland officers will visit your property and may take a sample of the plant showing symptoms. The sample is sent to the specialised laboratory in Brisbane where it is tested for Panama TR4. The final result can take up to 6 weeks, and Biosecurity Queensland will advise you of the results. Read the *Diagnosing Panama TR4* factsheet on [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au) for more information.

For more information visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au) or call **13 25 23**

# How do I check my banana plants?

Surveillance on your farm can be undertaken informally and formally.

## Informal

Surveillance can be integrated into your current farming practices and every day activities. Staff that regularly access paddocks should be trained in disease identification and how to report suspect plants. During the course of their day to day duties, they can be on the lookout for symptoms of disease.

### Make sure your field staff:

- are trained to identify disease symptoms
- know what to do if they see signs of disease
- know who they report signs of disease to
- are equipped to record the location of the plant and to take photos
- use the *Panama TR4 Disease Identification Guide*.

Biosecurity Queensland offers free Panama TR4 information sessions. Contact us via email on [panamatr4@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:panamatr4@daf.qld.gov.au) or phone 07 4091 8140.



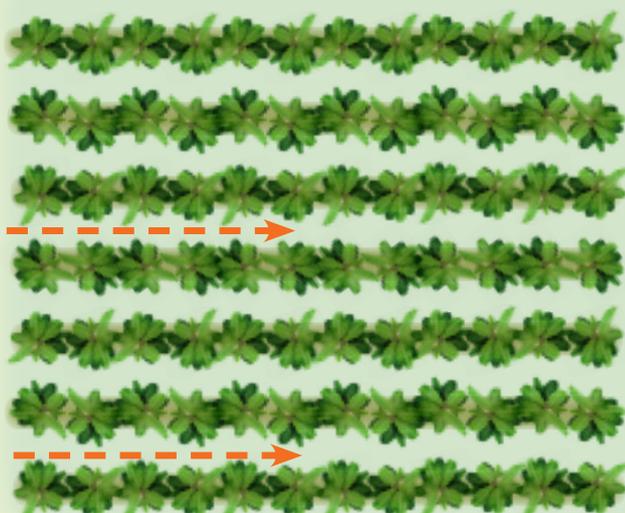
## Formal

You may decide to adopt a formal surveillance program for your farm. How often you do this may depend on your proximity and linkages to infested farms, resources and farm size.

Below is a guide based on the current methodology for Biosecurity Queensland's surveillance program:

- Surveillance is undertaken by workers walking along rows of banana plants.
- Workers should look at the plants immediately on either side and wherever possible, in the two rows each side of the row being walked.
- A suitable observation pace is slower than walking pace for staff to confidently examine plants for symptoms.
- Alternate rows should be walked for every surveillance round. For example if row two was walked in the first surveillance round, row three should be walked for the second surveillance round. See below.
- Workers should record the dates and the rows walked as part of your on-farm biosecurity plan.

*First surveillance round*



*Next round - alternate rows to achieve an off-set pattern of surveillance*

