



Banana Plant Protection, The Australian Way

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Bananas are a major staple food crop in the tropics but the production of bananas is under constant threat from a large number of plant diseases. Some of the major fungal plant diseases affecting bananas include; Panama wilt race 1 and tropical race 4, black Sigatoka, yellow Sigatoka and freckle. Major diseases caused by bacteria include Moko, Blood disease and Xanthomonas wilt, while major viral diseases include Banana Bunchy Top virus, Banana streak virus and Banana bract mosaic virus. Each of these pathogens has its own distribution, spread pattern, infection biology, epidemiology, and response to different environmental factors which demands tailored and different ways of control.

Although the amount of scientific information produced is high the challenge for each local industry and each individual grower in particular is how to access and incorporate these findings into an integrated management strategy which works and is cost effective on their farm. For some diseases control is farm specific but in other cases area wide management strategies may be needed or regulatory support in the production and provision of planting material of a high health status or the removal of plants showing signs of infectious diseases. Although science provides many of the components and solutions an integrated approach is needed where growers, scientists, governments and other stakeholders work together to achieve high levels of plant health. In this presentation I will give an overview of banana diseases in Australia and how Research outcomes are used to manage and control a wide range of endemic and exotic diseases in bananas.

Keywords: Disease management, disease control, Panama wilt TR4, contingency.