

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 711
Asked on Thursday, 12 May 2005

MR HORAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR PALASZCZUK)—

QUESTION:

Is the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries South Johnstone Research Station under quarantine because of the presence of fusarium wilt (panama disease) and will he explain what impact this quarantine has on the release of plant material from South Johnstone?

ANSWER:

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) South Johnstone Research Station is not under any form of quarantine due to the presence of fusarium wilt or any other banana pest or disease.

Fusarium oxysporum cubense (*F.o.c.*), the organism which causes fusarium wilt and panama disease, has a number of different races. *F.o.c.* Race 1 has been widely distributed across Australia as early as the 1960s, and is therefore not a disease for quarantine action. This form of the disease affects lady finger bananas. *F.o.c.* Race 4 (the “tropical” panama disease) has been found in an isolated outbreak in the Northern Territory, where it is under active quarantine containment. This form of the disease is of much greater concern, as it affects Cavendish bananas which are the mainstay of Queensland production.

F.o.c. Race 1 was detected in one isolated block of the South Johnstone Research Station in 1990. Since that detection, no bananas have been grown either on this block or in the immediate vicinity of it.

The presence of *F.o.c.* Race 1 on South Johnstone Research Station has no implications for distribution of banana planting material, as South Johnstone is not a source of such material. With support and expertise from DPI&F, the Queensland Banana Accredited Nursery (QBAN) scheme has been in operation for many years, and supplies quality, disease-free material to the banana industry under normal commercial arrangements. The QBAN scheme uses tissue culture and other systems to ensure that only the highest quality planting material is supplied to the Queensland industry.