

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**No. 1228**  
**Asked on 15 September 2009**

**MR POWELL** asked the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland (MR MULHERIN)—

**QUESTION:**

With reference to Panama disease which is endemic within sub-tropical banana crops in South East Queensland, making it difficult to source clean planting material—

Will the Minister take action to allow South East Queensland growers to source planting material from Northern NSW, given that both states operate under similar regulatory systems?

**ANSWER:**

Panama disease is a serious disease of bananas caused by the *Fusarium* wilt fungus which can be spread by infected planting materials. Panama disease is not the only disease risk when sourcing banana planting material from New South Wales (NSW) - there is also a high risk of introducing Banana Bunchy Top Virus.

Bunchy top is a very serious disease of bananas which devastated the Queensland banana industry during the 1920s. It still lingers in the southern areas of Queensland and in the adjacent northern NSW.

In relation to planting material as suckers, there is an **extremely** high risk of introducing either Panama disease or Banana Bunchy Top Virus through suckers, and consequently the introduction of suckers from NSW to Queensland is not allowed.

There are two options available to growers sourcing clean planting material:

- Firstly, they could source material via the Queensland Banana Accredited Nursery scheme (known as QBAN), which provides planting material as tissue culture plants where the mother plant material has been sourced from Panama-free areas and also tested for Banana Bunchy Top Virus and other viral diseases.

These tissue culture plants can be introduced into Queensland from NSW if they meet several criteria, including that they are accompanied by a Plant Health Certificate stating the plant is free from banana bunchy top, banana streak and cucumber mosaic viruses, as per the *Plant Protection Regulation 2002*.

- Secondly, the grower could also source clean Cavendish plants, free from sub-tropical race 4 of Panama disease, from North Queensland.

NSW has similar restrictions to protect their banana industry from these two diseases and their web site also promotes the QBAN scheme.