Media Release

Willem Westra van Holthe, Member for Katherine
Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

**NT Government offers assistance to Queensland banana industry**

18 March 2015

The Northern Territory Government has offered its support to Queensland, as the state’s banana industry deals with a Panama disease outbreak in Tully.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said it’s in the best interests of the nation that everyone works together.

“My Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF) is providing diagnostic laboratory support. Our local NT team is conducting analysis to confirm diagnosis of the disease,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“We also had a Queensland Quarantine Officer visit the Territory last week to gather information and advice on systems used in the NT biosecurity effort.

“The model being used by our Banana Freckle Eradication Team is considered leading edge and something the rest of the nation can learn from,” he said.

The Banana Freckle Eradication Team has also been involved in conference calls with the control centre in Queensland to share knowledge, particularly around best practice biosecurity methods.

Minister Westra van Holthe said Queensland had offered similar support when the Territory experienced a Panama outbreak in 1997.

“The Queensland banana industry supported our research program between 1998 and 2004 when we were looking at alternative commercial varieties of bananas,” he said.

“We are all in this together and it’s important we have a national approach that is collaborative.

“DPIF will continue to work with Queensland to identify other areas where we may be able to offer support, including technical advice.”

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