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Dole unveils updated TR4 strategy



One year since the disease was discovered in Colombia Dole has shared its latest efforts to fight TR4

Dole has released an update on its efforts to combat Fusarium Tropical Race 4 (TR4) in Latin America, a year after it was detected in Colombia.

In the past 12-months Dole ramped-up its TR4 response plan, implementing site-specific TR4 prevention activities throughout Latin America in coordination with local authorities and international experts to contain and prevent spread.

A three-year containment programme was immediately implemented in 2019 to ensure biosecurity protocols in every Dole banana farm, as well as those of Dole's independent suppliers.

Those protocols built upon best practices implemented in the banana producing countries where the disease has been successfully contained and are continually reviewed and strengthened per site—based upon the farm layout and location—to maximise the effectiveness of the risk-based mitigation plan.

Dole said it has and will continue to share these best practices with independent growers and will engage with governments, multi-stakeholder initiatives and industry partners to ensure its actions are coordinated with the wider response, both in Latin America and globally.

Patricio Gutiérrez, director of innovation research and development of Dole Tropical Products, said these efforts had required significant investment and as of the end of July 2020 there is no evidence that TR4 has spread from the area in Colombia in which it was initially detected.

"Fortunately to date, the spread of this disease in Latin America has been contained to only the La Guajira region of Colombia, but this issue is not isolated to one region or one banana grower; it affects the entire industry and we must all be vigilant," Gutiérrez said.

"Containment alone is not sufficient. We must find ways to move beyond defense

and find a sustainable solution to this issue in the long-term."

Dole said it is continuing to work on a number of other solutions to the problems TR4 poses.

It is investigating is how to implement safe and approved biological control measures to prevent disease and is working closely with research institutions around the world in developing a disease resistant banana variety through crop improvement and conventional breeding methods.

Since 2016, Dole has participated in a consortium working in partnership with the Honduran Research Foundation (FHIA) to develop such varieties. More recently, it began collaborating with companies working on precision biotechnology as a means to develop TR4 resistant bananas and is also part of the Global Alliance against TR4 led by IICA and Bayer.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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