



By Gabrielle Easter

Monday 16th October 2017, 2:25 GMT

Ergon Energy to help stop spread of banana disease



Queensland's Ergon Energy will install 600 digital devices to prevent the spread of Tropical Race 4 Panama disease

Queensland's Ergon Energy is installing more than 600 digital devices on banana farms to prevent the spread of Tropical Race 4 (TR4) Panama disease.

The soil borne disease has been detected on [two farms in far north Queensland](#), which supplies around 85 per cent of Australia's bananas.

The Queensland government is overseeing the roll-out of the remotely-read power metres, which stop metre readers from entering banana farms. Under strict biosecurity protocols, banana farms in the region have become off-limits to non-essential vehicles.

Queensland energy minister Mark Bailey said the metres can be read remotely using the 3G and 4G networks were available, or if access is limited, growers will read the meters themselves and report that information back to Ergon.

"Digital meters are a significant step in preventing the spread of Panama disease which is a threat to the region's important banana industry. There will be no cost to banana producers for the meter switch over," Bailey said.

"The digital meters will also allow faster access to data - this can be used by farmers to make

better decisions on tariff options and improve their energy consumption."

Ergon Energy is in the process of contacting all affected banana growers in the region, and expects to roll out to be completed by December.