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Northern Territory clear of banana freckle

Australian state declared free from the disease owing to a years-long four-part eradication plan



Following banana freckle detection in the Northern Territory, Australia in 2013, the disease has been successfully eradicated.

The Australian government officially announced today that the eradication campaign is complete and the Northern Territory is officially declared banana freckle-free.

Australian minister for agriculture, David Littleproud said the event gives the country's A\$1.2bn banana industry confidence in its security.

"The disease posed a real threat to the livelihoods of many banana growers,

but swift action saw it contained to the Northern Territory before it was eradicated," said Littleproud.

"The Coalition Government contributed \$6 million to the national response program led by the Northern Territory and assisted with surveillance, monitoring and response planning.

"The partnership between the Northern Territory and the Australian Banana Growers Council was an essential component of the eradication program. The efforts of banana growers who participated in the program in the Northern Territory should also be commended," he said.

The fungal pathogen doesn't cause harm to consumers but stunts the growth of the plant and fruit making it unappealing for sale and reducing productivity. It also leaves signature freckles on the fruit and leaves.

The disease was originally detected on a Cavendish banana plant – the country's overarching commercial variety.