



Media Release
Shane Knuth MP
Member for Hill
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Dametto and Knuth push for aerial shooting in Panama fight

Member for Hill Shane Knuth MP, along with Member for Hinchinbrook Nick Dametto MP, are stressing the urgency for feral pig aerial shooting to help manage the deadly Panama TR4 outbreak. This comes after a Tully farm has sent a banana tree sample to Brisbane for testing this week – potentially making it the fourth case in the area.

The recent deadly Panama TR4 outbreaks in Tully are largely spread by wild pigs and threaten the regions \$600 million-dollar banana industry, which contributes \$1.3 billion to the national economy. Queensland accounts for 94 per cent of Australia's banana production, almost all of that is in North Queensland. The industry employs directly and indirectly 10,000 people, again most of which are in North Queensland.

Knuth, along with Dametto, have been pushing the State Government for extra funding for aerial pig shooting in Panama affected areas.

"Local growers know how to handle this and are working well with Bio Security Qld. Australia is currently recognised worldwide for its treatment of Panama TR4. While that is great news, more funding needs to be allocated to ensure the safety of our banana crops and to assist growers in implementation of the additional measures required to safeguard their properties against Panama.

"I have written to the Minister again to push my call for funding for aerial shooting in Panama affected areas, and I can assure the community that both Nick and I will continue to work with the relevant departments to ensure adequate funding also continues," Mr Knuth said.

Along with Knuth, Dametto would like to see better management of National Parks to help control the issue.

"The 'lock it up and forget it' attitude the State Government has when it comes to our National Parks is a major contributing factor in the spread of Panama disease. The farms situated in Tully Valley are locked in by three sides of National Park and more funding is necessary to control feral pig numbers in these reserves," he said.

"Farmers are doing all they can and carrying out a lot of hard work which is needed to keep the feral pig population from exploding. It's time the State Government took this as a seriously as we do and increase funds available to combat this industry-destroying problem," Mr Dametto said.

ENDS.