

Australian government approves release of QUT-developed GM banana

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The Australian Government has issued QUT a licence to commercially release QCAV-4, a genetically modified (GM) variety of Cavendish banana designed to help save the world's Cavendish banana production.

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The FMM made up of ministers from Australian state and territory governments and the Australian and New Zealand governments, has 60 days to either ratify FSANZ's decision or request a review.

The QCAV-4 banana is the world's first GM banana to be approved for commercial production and also the first Australian GM fruit approved for growing in Australia. QCAV-4 offers a potential safety net against the devastating Panama Disease tropical race 4 (TR4) which threatens the global \$20 billion banana industry.

QUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Margaret Sheil said this was a significant milestone for the QCAV-4 research team at QUT, where the Banana Biotechnology Program has been at the forefront of banana research for more than 25 years.

“It has been 20 years since QUT researchers received an Australian Research Council grant to search for potential TR4 resistance genes,” Professor Sheil said.

“This is a wonderful example of fundamental research progressing through a commercialisation journey into a tangible outcome. QUT, along with our wonderful funders and partners, has been supporting the research for two decades so it's fantastic to reach this milestone.”

QUT Distinguished Professor James Dale and his team have been working on developing and growing genetically modified Cavendish bananas for more than 20 years.

“This is a major step for QCAV-4 and comes after many years of development,” Professor Dale said.