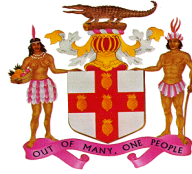


PEST ALERT



PLANT QUARANTINE/PRODUCE INSPECTION UNIT
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

HOPE GARDENS,
KINGSTON 6,
JAMAICA

Phytosanitary Alert

New Threat to Bananas in the Region

Arising from the second meeting of the Plant Health Directors of the Caribbean the region was informed of the threat of a severe form of **'Panama Disease' of bananas**. This particular form of the disease is not known to occur in the region, its distribution is being limited to regions of Africa and Asia. The tropical race (TR4) caused by the fungus, *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* affects Cavendish type bananas that are tolerant to the races of the pathogen that were responsible for massive destruction of the Gros Michel variety many decades ago. The pathogen is dispersed by contaminated vegetative planting material of bananas, plantains, and other plants of the heliconiaceae and musaceae families as well as in soil.

The pathogen is not known to exist in Jamaica; consequently the Plant Quarantine and Produce Inspection Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will be taking the necessary actions to prevent entry of the pathogen.