2019

NPHPTP National Plant Health Proficiency Testing Program

Australian National Quality Assurance Program

Program Information for Participants for National Plant Health Proficiency Testing Program

Introduction

The National Plant Health Proficiency Testing Program (NPHPTP) is coordinated by the Australian National Quality Assurance Program (ANQAP) at the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) on behalf of The Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD).

The major focus of the program is proficiency testing of Bacteria, Nematode, Virus, Fungi and Insects.

Sample panels are forwarded to laboratories as per the **NPHPTP Test Schedule**. ANQAP aims to provide a high-quality service:

- Test samples are supplied by contracted laboratories who ensure the samples are fit-for-purpose.
- When a subcontractor has prepared the samples for ANQAP, they are acknowledged in the report for that test.
- Test samples will be, as far as is technically possible, matrix samples of a similar type to those routinely analysed by most participating laboratories.
- Where applicable, the levels of target analytes in the samples distributed are selected to represent levels that would be measured by most participating laboratories.
- The results from all laboratories are collated and evaluated, and reports prepared.

Confidentiality

To protect the identity of participating laboratories, each laboratory will be allocated a confidential code number. The identity and codes of all participating laboratories will be known only to ANQAP staff. Laboratories are advised by email of their confidential code number at the beginning of the year's program. This laboratory identification is changed annually.

Tests included in the program – refer to the **NPHPTP Test Schedule** (see website)

All participants will be notified via email if ANQAP needs to alter the schedule.

Enrolment

Registration

Enrolment paperwork is forwarded to interested laboratories before each new cycle. It is also available on the ANQAP website www.anqap.com. Late enrolments can be accepted however a laboratory may be too late to be included in some of the scheduled tests. Invoices are payable within 30 days from the date of invoice. Sample dispatch and/or reports may be delayed where payment is outstanding. Freight charges are included in the participation fee. Participants may be required to provide their own import permit.

Cancellation of participation

If a laboratory wishes to cancel participation in the program, a partial refund may be possible. Notification of cancellation of participation must be in writing. If the laboratory wishes to cancel participation after the samples are dispatched, no refund will be granted. ANQAP will seek feedback from a laboratory that withdraws from the program.

If a participant would like to return a sample, ANQAP will only accept it in the original state that it was sent. If not, the participant should discard it as per their normal procedures.

Scheduled Testing

Sample dispatch - refer to the **NPHPTP Test Schedule** (see website)

Laboratories will be advised via email once samples have been dispatched with tracking details. They are asked to notify ANQAP if they have not received the samples within a reasonable time frame or if the samples have been lost or damaged during transit. In this case, a new sample panel will be reissued. Each sample will be clearly labelled. The sample panels will be accompanied by a **Specimen Advice form**.

Samples are forwarded at ambient air temperature.
Please note that ANQAP reserves the right to refuse requests for samples at their own discretion.

Testing

Laboratories should treat the ANQAP samples as routine diagnostic specimens. They should be tested in-house and not sub-contracted to another laboratory. Results should be treated in confidence by participant laboratories.

Reporting results

The current version of the appropriate **Result Reporting Form** must be used. This will be sent to participants at the beginning of each testing cycle or as the documents are updated. The current form is also available on the ANQAP website. Results can be reported electronically and emailed to ANQAP, or the form may be photocopied, filled in by hand, scanned and emailed to ANQAP.

Results should be reported:

- **on time - late results will not be accepted unless ANQAP has been contacted before the due date with a reasonable explanation for the delay**
- in a legible hand or typed to avoid transcription errors
- including details of the method used, copies of methods, the assay operator, the laboratory name and code number, cut-off limits, raw and calculated results including means of replicate results where appropriate and interpretation of results (positive / negative). Any sample or test problems should also be described.

Results should be reported as they would be for routine diagnostic samples.

ANQAP reports

ANQAP will aim to issue a report to each participating laboratory within three weeks of the results due deadline. Separate reports will be prepared for each test and will indicate whether the testing was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Interim reports, if requested from the participant, can be issued but no other results will be disclosed with that report until all participant results are received. The report also includes a summary table of results from all participating laboratories.

ANQAP makes every effort to avoid transcription errors however participants are requested to check that their results are entered correctly. Should any errors be identified, laboratories are asked to inform ANQAP as soon as possible. An amended report will be forwarded to the affected laboratory as soon as possible. Participants are encouraged to contact ANQAP to discuss reports if further clarification is required or if they disagree with the report in any way.

Results

Tests reported as positive or negative results will be assessed on correct interpretation.

Results will be classified as:

Concordant Results submitted by this laboratory are correct.

Discordant Results submitted by this laboratory are incorrect.

Non-Conforming Results

The Coordinator is responsible for the management of non-conformances and for ensuring that problems are corrected, affected parties are notified and that review of procedures is undertaken to avoid further non-conformances.

When a sample gives an unexpected result, this may be documented as a non-conformance and the sample may be removed from use. Affected laboratories will be informed via the report that the sample has not performed as expected and results for that sample will not be used in classifying laboratories. The entire sample panel may also be re-issued to laboratories due to a major non-conformance of the panel.

Contact Details

ANQAP actively seeks and welcomes your feedback. If there are any issues with reporting or your assessment of performance, please contact us. This matter will be dealt with as soon as possible and be dealt with in total confidence.

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This document is updated on a regular basis. For the most recent updated version, please refer to the ANQAP website.