ANQAP National Plant Health Proficiency Testing Program

Program Information for Participants (PIP) for the National Plant Health Proficiency Testing Program (NPHPTP)

Introduction

The NPHPTP is coordinated by the Australian National Quality Assurance Program (ANQAP)/the State Government of Victoria on behalf of The Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD).

The major focus of the program is proficiency testing for identification of bacteria, nematodes, viruses, fungi, phytoplasma and invertebrates which cause disease in plants.

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

- Supplies test samples sourced from contracted laboratories who ensure the samples are fit-for-purpose.
- Acknowledges subcontractors for their contribution/s to the program.
- Supplies test samples which are, as far as is technically possible, matrix samples of a similar type to those routinely analysed by most participating laboratories.
- Where applicable, supplies samples in which the levels of target analytes are representative of levels that would be measured by most participating laboratories.
- Collates and evaluates the results from participant laboratories and distributes them as a collated report.

Confidentiality

To protect the identity of participating laboratories, each laboratory will be allocated a confidential number. The identity and number of all participating laboratories will be known only to ANQAP staff. Laboratories are advised by email of their confidential number upon enrolment acceptance, usually prior to commencement of the program. The confidential number changes annually. All results for participants will be identified by their confidential numbers.

Test List

Refer to the **NPHPTP Test Schedule** (see website www.anqap.com) or **Enrolment Forms** for the test list.

Enrolment

1. 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, unless transit by courier is specifically requested upon enrolment. Courier fees will be added to the participation invoice. Participants are required to provide an import permit to ANQAP prior to the dispatch of samples.

2. Cancellation of participation

If a laboratory wishes to cancel participation in the program, a credit 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 may seek feedback from a laboratory that withdraws from the program.

ANQAP will not accept a return of a sample. The participant must discard it as per their normal clinical waste disposal procedures.

Scheduled Testing

1. **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 when they receive their samples. If the samples have been lost or damaged during transit, a new sample panel will be reissued where stock levels permit. Each sample will be clearly labelled with the test name and sample number. The sample panels will be accompanied by a **Specimen Advice Form (SAF)**. The SAF details the sample storage and processing requirements. The laboratory must follow these instructions otherwise the panel/samples may be compromised in which case the panel/samples may no longer be valid to use in the test.

Samples are forwarded at ambient air temperature.

Please note that ANQAP reserves the right to refuse requests for samples at their own discretion.

Replacement samples will be charged at full cost, including additional transit charges.

2. 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.

3. 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 must be reported electronically and emailed to ANQAP, or the reporting 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 under any circumstances**
- 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 confidential 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 five weeks of the results due deadline. A collated report will be prepared for each test and will indicate whether the reported results were concordant/discordant for each participant. ANQAP will not issue interim reports.

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 laboratories 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.

Classification Determination

Virus / Phytoplasma Panel

Samples are reported as either positive or negative. Results will be assessed on correct interpretation and will be classified as follows:

- **Concordant**: Result submitted by the laboratory is in agreement with the expected result as determined by the sample supplier.
- **Discordant**: Result submitted by the laboratory is not in agreement with the expected result as determined by the sample supplier.

Bacteria / Fungi / Nematode / Invertebrates Panel

The identification of each specimen must be reported. Results will be assessed on correct identification and will be classified as follows:

- **Concordant**: Result submitted by the laboratory is in agreement with the expected result as determined by the sample supplier.
- **Discordant**: Result submitted by the laboratory is not in agreement with the expected result as determined by the sample supplier.

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 are undertaken to avoid further non-conformances, where applicable.

ANQAP Certificates of Participation

At the conclusion of the testing cycle, a Certificate of Participation will be issued to each enrolled laboratory, listing the proficiency tests completed. This certificate will not list classification of results. Laboratories who did not report results by the due date will not have the test listed on the certificate. The certificate will only list those tests for which the laboratory has received a classification. Certificates will be emailed to the nominated contact at each laboratory as per the Enrolment Form.

Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy

ANQAP participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner that is consistent with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2023*. Harmful behaviours including violence and aggression, bullying, harassment, and conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions are unacceptable as they may cause hazards/psychological hazards and can lead to injury. Participants who demonstrate harmful behaviours will receive a formal written warning. Those participants who continue to demonstrate harmful behaviours once a formal written warning has been issued will be banned from participating in the ANQAP proficiency testing programs altogether. They may have their current enrolment cancelled with no further services provided and no refunds will be offered.

Contact Details

ANQAP actively seeks and welcomes your feedback. If there are any issues, please contact us. Your enquiry will be dealt with promptly and in confidence.

Rose Kursun
ANQAP National Coordinator
Australian National Quality Assurance Program (ANQAP)
AgriBio Centre, La Trobe University Campus
5 Ring Road, Bundoora. Victoria, 3083 Australia.

Telephone: 61- 3 - 9032 7024

ANQAP e-mail: anqap.quality@agriculture.vic.gov.au

ANQAP website: www.anqap.com

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