



The revolutionary pest control treatment Confidor Guard has been launched throughout North Queensland.

Stem injection controls pests

AN experienced research and development team from Bayer CropScience, in conjunction with equipment specialists NJ Phillips, this week launched Confidor Guard insecticide to Australian banana growers.

A great deal of excitement has centred on a new, innovative method of precision application, designed specifically for banana crops.

This technology delivers targeted pest control from Confidor Guard, reducing the number of applications each crop requires.

Banana grower Fred Cauchi, from Oakumgold, South Johnston, said the product really works.

"It completely controls the pests and the plants have responded very well.

"Stem injecting Confidor Guard is much faster than applying other chemicals for rust thrips and borer control.

"By injecting the sucker with Confidor Guard I was protected right through to bunching," Mr Cauchi said.

Tony Fitzgerald, Far North Queensland's Bayer representative is thrilled with the new technology.

"Now we administer a set dose of Confidor Guard to an individual plant, directly injecting it into the base of the unbunched follower crop, giving growers excellent pest control" he said.

"Before now, insecticides were typically administered as a soil application," Mr Fitzgerald said.

The applicator is available in either a manual or pneumatic form. Matthew Phillips, of NJ Phillips, says the new Confidor Guard application technology has been developed in response to growing industry demand to address occupational health and safety concerns for workers.

"The air-assisted pneumatic gun will be a great benefit to workers minimising incidents of repetitive strain injuries," he said.

The application technique, designed specially for Confidor Guard, will improve worker safety, eliminate exposure to spray drift and treated soil.

Environmentally, the technology has encouraging benefits, diminishing any possible impacts on the surrounding ecosystem

including run-off into waterways and other areas such as the Great Barrier Reef.

This benefit is significant, not only to growers but the wider community.

Among the many benefits of Confidor Guard, this innovative stem injection method reduces pesticide exposure to other beneficial species targeting only rust thrips and weevil borer that are detrimental to the crop.

Six Confidor Guard launches were held by the team, with Bayer adopting a hands on approach, launching the product across a 200km stretch of banana plantations in Far North Queensland.

"It was a great chance for growers and distributors to talk with Bayer and ask questions specific to their crops.

"For us, this is a great way to fully understand what's happening at a grass roots level," Ben Hoodless, marketing manager for Confidor Guard, said.

"We recognise that time is money and therefore wanted to make the launch as practical and time effective for growers as possible," he said.

The response from growers attending the launches was extremely encouraging for Bayer and NJ Phillips.

Grower Cameron Flegler, of Tully, recently said Confidor Guard worked well on his farm.

"We had no problems with rust thrips or weevil borer. The fruit had less marking and dimpling from thrips.

"This resulted in better quality fruit that sold well. We only had to apply it once in the crop cycle," Mr Flegler said.

Bayer CropScience's research and development team is exploring the expansion of Confidor Guard application innovation for other crops.

This is not only a positive step forward for the industry, but for Australian agriculture as a whole.

Bayer CropScience is on of the only research and development specialist dedicated to the development of new solutions for the banana industry.

Current data protection laws state that Confidor Guard is the only registered Imidacloprid brand for banana application in Australia.