



**Office of the Queensland
Food Farmers' Commissioner**

Department of Primary Industries

13th July 2026

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601

Delivered by email: plantstakeholders@aff.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern:

The Office of the Queensland Food Farmers' Commissioner is aware of the current Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis (BIRA) being undertaken for the potential importation of fresh Cavendish bananas from the Philippines into Australia.

Given that approximately 94 per cent of Australia's bananas are grown in Queensland, any decision to permit imports of fresh bananas from the Philippines would have significant implications for Queensland growers and the broader Australian banana industry. The industry contributes substantially to regional economies, supports local jobs, and underpins the viability of many farming communities across the state.

While we do not see a direct role for our office in the BIRA process at this stage, we share the concerns being raised by growers and industry stakeholders regarding the potential impacts of any change to current import arrangements.

We also acknowledge the importance of maintaining Australia's strong biosecurity framework, which has played a critical role in protecting domestic agricultural industries from serious pests and diseases.



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Of particular concern are the findings outlined in the report on the technical visit to the Philippines, which noted that *“banana diseases of concern to Australia, including Moko, black Sigatoka, banana freckle and Panama disease Tropical Race 4 (TR4), were observed to be present at the farms we visited.”* The presence of these diseases highlights the substantial biosecurity risks that must be carefully assessed and managed before any decisions are made regarding international imports.

Australia is one of the few countries free from the most problematic banana diseases – this disease-free status must be protected. With biosecurity resources already stretched, we must ensure existing capability is not diluted by expanding responsibilities without matching investment.

The potential introduction of exotic pests or diseases could have serious consequences for the Australian banana industry, resulting in increased production costs, disrupting local ecosystems, and long-term impacts on the sustainability of the industry. As such, it is essential that any import risk assessment is rigorous, transparent, and based on sound scientific evidence.

We will continue to monitor developments in this matter closely and engage with relevant stakeholders as the process progresses. In addition, we intend to raise the issue with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regarding matters relating to labour and workplace practices in the context of trade.

A strong biosecurity system underpins both agricultural prosperity and food security. We support trade that complements—not compromises—Australia's biosecurity protections.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Chambers'.

Rachel Chambers

Queensland's Food Farmers' Commissioner