

5 August 2026

Australian Government
Biosecurity Plant and Science Services Division
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Submit comments to plantstakeholders@aff.gov.au

RE: Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis (BIRA)

Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers (QFVG) has represented fruit, vegetable, and nut growers in Queensland for more than 100 years. As the state industry body for commercial horticulture, we represent 3,500 businesses employing around 25,000 people directly and supporting a further 20,000 people, predominantly in Queensland's regions. Our industry contributes around \$4.1 billion of production at the farm gate and around \$6 billion, overall, to the broader Queensland economy (directly and indirectly). Queensland produces around one-third of the nation's fruit, one-fifth of the nation's vegetables, and around one-tenth of the nation's nuts.

The Australian Banana industry is a national powerhouse. The banana industry is worth \$1.3 billion annually, supporting more than 540 growers and 18,000 jobs, and underpinning the nation's food bowl.

Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers Ltd (QFVG) welcome the opportunity to contribute to the review of the Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis relating to Bananas from the Philippines.

Australia currently does not permit the commercial importation of fresh bananas from any country because of biosecurity concerns.

The key principal issues are:

- Australia is largely disease-free
 - Unlike most countries, we remain free from many of the world's most devastating banana diseases. This is a unique advantage we must protect.
- Imports create unacceptable risks
 - Allowing bananas from overseas opens the door to exotic diseases that could devastate farms, families, and regional communities.
- Introduction of exotic diseases that could seriously damage Australia's banana industry. Australia maintains one of the world's strictest plant biosecurity systems. Its objective is to reduce risk to a very low level, although not zero.
 - Whether new scientific evidence and alternative biosecurity measures can reduce risk sufficiently to meet Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP).
- whether Philippine production systems can reliably manage those risks on an ongoing basis, and what measures the Australian Government would require to verify those assurances.
- Balancing international trade obligations with protection of Australia's banana industry.
- The impact hitchhiker pests or other diseases could have on other agricultural industries and to the natural environment

The potential introduction of major biosecurity risks such as Moko, Black Sigatoka, Banana Freckle, Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 (TR4), Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) and various Arthropod Pests raises serious concerns not just for the Australian Banana industry but also other fruit and vegetable production systems.

The arthropod pests identified and their associated viruses could establish in Australia if introduced on imported fruit and have the potential to impact a wide range of commercial horticulture crops some of which have very limited access to management practice and chemicals to manage an incursion.

Moko disease is a devastating bacterial wilt which affects bananas, plantains, and heliconias as well as tomatoes, potatoes, and solanaceous plants and various tropical broadleaf weeds.

Whilst the Philippine production system is seeking an alternative management practice assessment the presence of Moko, Black Sigatoka, Banana Freckle and Panama TR4 on **ALL** farms visited to date clearly demonstrates that they are just managing the diseases rather than eliminating them and hence this poses a significant risk.

Australia already imposes strict movement controls on bananas **within** Australia.

The existence of these domestic controls demonstrates the importance Australia places on preventing disease spread, both internally and from overseas.

Overall Conclusion

The importation of fresh Cavendish bananas from the Philippines remains a high-profile biosecurity issue rather than a trade issue alone. Whilst QFVG recognises improvements in Philippine production, monitoring and export systems, inspections by Biosecurity Australia also confirmed that several quarantine-significant diseases—including Moko, Black Sigatoka, Banana Freckle and Panama TR4—are present in production areas – this is a major biosecurity concern.

The policy question is therefore not whether these diseases exist, but whether the proposed alternative measures can reliably reduce the risk of their introduction, establishment and spread to a level consistent with Australia's stringent biosecurity

standard (ALOP). Until that is demonstrated through the ongoing BIRA process, commercial imports of fresh bananas into Australia **should remain restricted**.

Australia does not need banana imports

- Australian banana growers produce more than enough high-quality fruit to supply the entire domestic market, year-round.

Put simply, imports don't add up

- National food security and the prosperity of regional communities should not be compromised for imports that are unnecessary and place existing Australian production at risk.

Yours sincerely,



Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers

