

Provisional final import risk analysis report for fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia

Questions and Answers – 7 June 2012

Import risk analysis

Why is this import risk analysis being undertaken?

Australia is responding to Malaysia's market access request for fresh decrowned pineapple fruit, dating from 2004.

What is an IRA and how does it work?

An import risk analysis (IRA) is a regulated process that identifies and assesses risks posed by the pests and diseases relevant to an import proposal. If those risks exceed Australia's appropriate level of protection, the IRA specifies what measures should be taken to reduce those risks to an acceptable level. The IRA process is described in the *Import Risk Analysis Handbook 2011*, available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) website.

The IRA involves issuing a draft IRA report for a 60-day stakeholder comment period, considering and incorporating the comments into a provisional final IRA report. The provisional IRA report is then open to appeals. Appeals are considered by the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel (IRAAP), which is independent of DAFF Biosecurity.

At the conclusion of the appeal process and after any issues arising from the IRAAP process have been addressed, DAFF Biosecurity will provide the final IRA report and a recommendation for a policy determination to the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

What is the purpose of the provisional final report?

The provisional final IRA report identifies quarantine risks associated with importing fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia, and recommends quarantine measures to reduce the risks to a very low level, in line with Australia's approach to biosecurity.

In preparing the report, stakeholders' comments and scientific literature have been carefully reviewed.

This is a standard IRA, which means it has a 24-month timeframe and is open to appeal.

Publishing the provisional final IRA report provides stakeholders, who feel that there was significant deviation from the regulated IRA process that adversely affected their interests, with an opportunity to appeal before the final report and policy recommendation are provided to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

What quarantine pests have been identified in the provisional final IRA report?

The provisional final IRA report identifies four pests of quarantine concern. They are: *Dysmicoccus grassii* (mealybug); *Dysmicoccus neobrevipes* (grey pineapple mealybug); *Planococcus minor* (Pacific mealybug); *Pseudococcus jackbeardsleyi* (Jack Beardsley mealybug).

What quarantine measures have been recommended for fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia?

This provisional final report recommends a combination of risk management measures and operational systems that will reduce the risk associated with the importation of fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia into Australia to achieve Australia's ALOP, specifically:

- pre-shipment or on-arrival methyl bromide fumigation or an alternative post harvest treatment approved by DAFF Biosecurity for mealybugs
- an operational system for the maintenance and verification of the phytosanitary status of pineapple fruit, including:
 - registration of export plantations;
 - registration of packing houses and auditing of procedures

- registration of fumigators / treatment facilities and auditing of procedures
- packaging and labelling requirements
- specific conditions for storage and transport
- pre-export phytosanitary inspection and certification by the Department of Agriculture, Malaysia
- on-arrival phytosanitary inspection, remedial action when required, and clearance by DAFF Biosecurity.

Will Australia be adequately protected from exotic pests?

A comprehensive risk assessment of pests has been undertaken and, where appropriate, risk management options have been recommended to address risks associated with exotic pests and diseases. The assessment is based on the latest available scientific information and the measures recommended reflect Australia's overall approach to managing quarantine risks.

Are there any regional differences for Australian states?

Regional differences have been identified for one quarantine pest requiring management measures. Pacific mealybug has been identified as a quarantine pest for Western Australia.

The recommended quarantine measures take account of these regional differences.

Was the pathogen known to cause bacterial fruit collapse and heart rot in pineapples in Malaysia considered as part of this IRA?

The bacterial pathogen known to cause fruit collapse and heart rot in Malaysian pineapple production systems—*Erwinia chrysanthemi* (pineapple strain, *Dickeya* sp.) — was assessed as part of this IRA.

A comprehensive pest risk assessment was undertaken on pineapple fruit collapse and heart rot and the overall unrestricted risk was considered to be very low. This is below Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP) and therefore no specific measures are required for this pest. All stakeholder comments regarding pineapple fruit collapse

and heart rot were carefully considered in the preparation of the provisional final IRA report.

Does Australia allow any imports of fresh pineapple fruit now?

Yes. Australia currently permits the importation of decrowned fresh pineapple fruit from the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Solomon Islands, subject to a range of phytosanitary measures.

Does this give the go-ahead for the importation of fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia?

No. The release of this provisional final IRA report, which is subject to a 30-day appeals period, does not give the go-ahead for importation of fresh decrowned pineapple fruit from Malaysia.

After the conclusion of the independent appeal process conducted by the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel (IRAAP), DAFF Biosecurity will provide a final IRA report and a recommendation for a policy determination to the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine who will decide whether to grant an import permit and any conditions that may be attached to a permit if the import is granted.

Consultation

How does DAFF Biosecurity consult stakeholders?

The regulated import risk analysis process requires DAFF Biosecurity to consult with stakeholders at key stages of the process for specified periods. As well as informal consultation at the commencement of the IRA, this includes the public release for comments of a draft report, use of external experts, and opportunity for appeal.

DAFF Biosecurity received comments from stakeholders on the draft IRA report, which was issued in October 2011. These comments were considered in preparing the provisional final IRA report. In addition, Growcom, the pineapple industry representative body, was consulted on a range of issues, including

Erwinia chrysanthemi (pineapple strain, *Dickeya* sp.) causing bacterial fruit collapse and heart rot.

DAFF Biosecurity has consulted with domestic and international stakeholders during the IRA process.

Has industry been consulted in developing the Malaysian pineapple IRA?

Yes, both formally and informally.

Formally, the industry through Growcom provided submissions during the consultation period for the draft import risk analysis report.

Informally, DAFF Biosecurity held face-to-face meetings and teleconferences with interested pineapple growers and representatives of Growcom.

The communication between industry and DAFF Biosecurity is ongoing.

Appeals process

How can an appeal be lodged?

Written appeals should be submitted by 7 July 2012 to:

Secretariat
Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel
Government Division
Department of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Email: IRAAP@daff.gov.au

Who considers the appeal?

The appeals process is independent from DAFF Biosecurity. The appeals panel is convened by the Chair of the Biosecurity Advisory Council (BAC). The Import Risk Analysis Appeal Panel (IRAAP) Chairman will consider any appeals received and decide in each case whether the statement of reasons provide evidence warranting consideration by an IRAAP. If so, they will convene a panel to consider the appeal(s). The other members are:

- another member of BAC (nominated by the Chair); and

- a senior officer from the Department of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry (nominated by the Secretary of the Department).

How long will it take for an appeal to be considered?

The appeals panel has 45 days after the closing date for appeals to consider its findings and report to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

What happens if an appeal is upheld?

If an appeal is upheld, the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel (IRAAP) may offer advice to DAFF Biosecurity. The IRAAP will consider the appeal(s) and report its findings to the appellant(s) and the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

What happens when the final policy is adopted?

Following the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine's determination of a quarantine policy, DAFF Biosecurity is responsible for implementing the policy.

DAFF Biosecurity will ensure that procedures to meet the quarantine conditions for the pests and diseases of concern are in place. Once the conditions are established, trade may commence.

Background information

Does Australia export fresh pineapple fruit?

Australia exports small quantities of pineapple to a limited number of countries.