



DAFF11/005D

4 February 2011

Biosecurity policy determination for bananas

A strong biosecurity and quarantine system is critical to Australia's rural and regional industries and jobs – particularly as a consequence of any heightened risk of pests and diseases due to increased trade flows.

The government is committed to a risk-based, science-based and conservative approach to biosecurity.

Comprehensive risk assessments of the pests and diseases of biosecurity concern underpin the quarantine response to market access requests made to Australia from another country.

Following the completion of an Import Risk Analysis in 2008, the Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine determined the quarantine policy for the importation of bananas from the Philippines in 2009.

If the Philippines wishes to export bananas to Australia, it would need to demonstrate that the required risk management measures can be achieved under commercial production conditions on an ongoing basis. This would need to occur before AQIS could issue a permit to import bananas into Australia from the Philippines.

To date, no import permit applications have been received from the Philippines.

BACKGROUND

Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine made a policy determination in March 2009 establishing a stringent quarantine policy for the importation of bananas from the Philippines, in line with Australia's conservative approach to quarantine.

The Philippines is required to demonstrate that the risk management measures can be achieved under commercial conditions on an ongoing basis.

The importation of bananas from the Philippines can be permitted subject to the *Quarantine Act 1908* and the application of phytosanitary measures as specified in the *Final import risk analysis report for the importation of Cavendish bananas from the Philippines*.

The final import risk analysis (IRA) report in 2008 identified seven groups of pests and diseases of concern, notably Moko, black Sigatoka and freckle, as well as a number of other pests not present in Western Australia that are present in eastern Australia.

The quarantine measures include:

- exports only from areas that demonstrate low pest prevalence



- registration of export blocks
- inspections to detect the presence of any diseases
- ongoing inspections of blocks and fruit, including by Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service inspectors
- disinfection and fungicide spraying
- mandatory pre-clearance arrangements with the presence and involvement of AQIS
- inspectors in the Philippines in applying quarantine conditions in the field, including in packing houses
- auditing and verification by AQIS of systems and processes used by the Philippines to certify any exports
- detailed data and documentation to be provided by the Philippines for consideration by Australia prior to any exports to verify and validate quarantine measures underpinned by laboratory and field experiments and commercial trials.

The main diseases and pests of quarantine concern are Moko, black Sigatoka, Freckle, Mealybugs, Armoured scales, Spider mites and Thrips.

The banana import conditions meet Australia's appropriate level of protection and will protect the health of our banana industry, agriculture and the environment.

Biosecurity Australia circulated several reports for consultation with stakeholders during the IRA, which began in May 2000:

- an issues paper in May 2001
- a technical information paper in May 2002
- draft IRA reports in 2002, 2004 & 2007.

The independent Eminent Scientists Group reviewed the IRA and concluded that all stakeholder comments had been properly considered in the preparation of the final IRA report.

The final IRA report was subject to an independent appeal process and the Import Risk Analysis Appeal Panel reported to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine and appellants on 23 January 2009 that it did not allow the appeals.

The *Final import risk analysis report for the importation of Cavendish bananas from the Philippines* is available at www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au.

The final IRA report is a comprehensive, science-based analysis that reflects Australia's appropriate level of protection.

IRAs are an important step in assessing the quarantine risks and, where appropriate, putting in place risk management measures to keep Australia free of exotic pests and diseases present in other countries.

Biosecurity Australia undertakes science-based risk analyses to assess any quarantine risks associated with applications to import agricultural and other commodities into Australia.