12 November 2008

**Final import risk analysis report for bananas**

Biosecurity Australia has issued a *Final import risk analysis report for Cavendish bananas from the Philippines* that proposes that bananas could enter Australia if the Philippines meets stringent risk management measures for pests and diseases of quarantine concern.

The report identifies 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 proposed quarantine measures contained in the final import risk analysis (IRA) report 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 AQIS 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 proposed banana import conditions meet Australia’s conservative approach to quarantine and will protect the health of our banana industry, agriculture and the environment.

Stakeholders have until 12 December 2008 (30 days) to appeal to the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel, which is independent of Biosecurity Australia, if they consider there was a significant deviation from the process set out in the *Import Risk Analysis Handbook* (2003), or a significant body of scientific information relevant to the outcome of the IRA was not considered.

Following the appeal process, the final report and recommendations will be provided to Australia’s Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine to make a quarantine policy determination on bananas.

The *Final import risk analysis report for 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 conservative approach to quarantine (i.e. 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 to Australia.

Further information: **www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au**.

Media contact: John Wilson, Biosecurity Australia, 02 6272 3811