



9th December 2014

Dr Kim Ritman
Chief Scientist
Australian Plant Protection Officer
Department of Agriculture
18 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2601

A review of Import Conditions for fresh Ginger from Fiji.

Dear Kim


The Australian Ginger Industry Association (AGIA) is pleased that government has announced the Import Conditions Review for fresh ginger from Fiji. It is our belief that there are some major flaws when it comes to importing ginger and that due diligence is required to ensure the Australian ginger growers are sustainable without further pest and disease incursions.

We believe that there are large projects which need to be conducted. It is AGIA's belief that two issues must be addressed as part of the outcome of this Review.

1. Undertake a specific research project to determine the efficacy of methyl bromide in the phytosanitary pathway from production to importation of Fijian ginger into Australia.
2. Undertake a research project to determine the genetic and pathogenic differences between the Fijian and Australian strains of *Radopholus similis*.

The intention of industry is to collaborate closely with the Department of Agriculture and the Queensland Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry in the undertaking of both projects.

AGIA puts forward the following researchers that we would like Biosecurity Australia to collaborate with during the review. It is our belief that these scientists have a better understanding of both the Australian and Fijian industries after having worked in both countries for ginger research.


Dr Mike Smith Senior Principal Scientist, Horticulture and Forestry Science, Agri-Science Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Ms Jennifer Cobon Nematologist, Agri-Science Queensland, Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry.

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The AGIA has commented previously that it believes imported fresh ginger has the real potential to be used as planting material either knowingly and unknowingly. Based on this innate probability, it is industry's belief that a review of the risk matrix must be undertaken to assure not only the Australian ginger industry, but other industries including bananas, potatoes and native vegetation.

Transparency is critical when moving forward. AGIA requests that we have regular discussions throughout the review process as we must work together. Testing of ginger in approved science laboratories is another topic that requires further discussion. To date we have conducted two rounds of diagnostic testing on ginger imported from Fiji, and detected live root knot nematode (*Meloidogyne*) in all samples tested. Clearly this is a problem.

To carry out this review we believe that sufficient time has not been allowed. We will be discussing this further with the Federal Minister of Agriculture. We hope that Biosecurity Australia can work in a timely manner with the researchers put forward.

AGIA believes that the Importation of Fijian Ginger should be suspended until the review is finalised and the research projects completed. At the end of the day we must protect Australian horticultural industries.

In closing, I reiterate the Australian ginger industry's appreciation of the Department's pro-active role in conducting this review and the positive nature of your engagement with all parties.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ARH' followed by a stylized flourish.

Anthony Rehbein
President