

Protecting our banana industry

The Federal Government (DAFF) has announced a review of quarantine arrangements to allow fresh banana imports from the Philippines. The ABGC strongly opposes this proposal.



Key Risks

- Australia is one of the few countries free from the most problematic banana diseases - this disease-free status must be protected.
- ABGC is very concerned about the introduction of Moko & Black Sigatoka.
- Almost safe is not safe enough: no quarantine system reduces risk to zero.
- History shows that once invasive pests arrive (e.g. fire ants, cane toads), eradication is almost impossible.



Government must protect the nation's growers, workers, and regional communities by rejecting banana imports. Protecting Australia's banana industry from exotic disease is critical to safeguarding food security, regional jobs, and consumer trust.

What's next in the review process:

- Grower information meetings: DAFF will hold in-person sessions in October (Far North Queensland and NSW) and in November (WA).
- On-ground assessment: Later this year, officials will conduct a technical, science-based visit to the Philippines. ABGC will facilitate a visit to Far North Queensland prior to this to ensure the technical team have knowledge of Australian practices.
- Issues paper: Expected in the first half of 2026. This will include more detail about the assessment and the process ahead.

What can I do now?

- Become an ABGC member: be part of a united voice for industry
members@abgc.org.au
- Subscribe for updates: get the latest news on this issue
communications@abgc.org.au

Visit ABGC's imports page



Frequently asked questions

Why has DAFF announced this now?

- 2008: Philippines allowed to import bananas to Australia but, at that time, biosecurity measures were too high and too costly for it to be viable
- 2018: Philippines formally requests Australia consider alternative measures.
- 2025: Philippines request Australia also consider access for an additional cultivar and an additional export province.

DAFF has completed a preliminary review of the requests to inform the assessment and has now allocated the resources to progress this. This is why stakeholders are being notified. The request must be considered under obligations to the World Trade Organisation.

What are the alternative measures the Philippines have requested?

The Philippines have not provided specific details on proposed alternative measures. The Philippines have requested that DAFF consider its commercial production practices as part of these measures.

Would imported bananas have to meet the same ethical employment, OH&S and environmental standards?

DAFF notes that considerations of ethical employment, OH&S and environmental standards are outside the scope of this biosecurity assessment. In the context of Australia's trade relations with the Philippines, matters relating to labour and workplace practices fall under the responsibility of other Government departments.

Who is attending the technical visit to the Philippines and does DAFF have control over where they visit (so they're not just shown a 'best of')?

The Government notes that discussions with the Philippines throughout the assessment process are government-to-government. Therefore, other experts or ABGC representatives or not permitted on the technical visit.

DAFF states their team is well versed in reviewing and understanding horticultural export supply chains. Experienced risk assessors, auditors and a plant pathologist with extensive experience in surveillance and identification of tropical plant diseases, including in bananas, will make up the team.

DAFF will visit several plantations and packing houses that currently export Cavendish bananas, in multiple regions on Mindanao. DAFF has requested to see different companies and different scales of operation. DAFF acknowledges that there are variations in production practices and states that the visit is not the only source of information used to assess the risk.