From: Chris and Helen Fullerton
To: RRAT, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Senate Inquiry Submission
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Inquiry into the effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapple from Malaysia

To whom It may concern,

My name is Chris Fullerton,I am a third generation pineapple grower from Elimbah in Queensland,sit as a director of Fullerton Farms Pty.Ltd and currently take the position of Chairman on the Pineapple Growers Advancement Group (PGAG),a group representing all comercial pineapple growers in Australia. Although having many concerns with the IRA response handed down by Bio-Security Australia (BA) here are some of my issues.

In 2008 , industry in consultation with Plant Health Australia developed our Bio-Security Deed. Identified as the number one threat to industry was Bacterial Fruit Collapse/Bacterial Heart Rot caused by the pathogen Erwinia Chrysanthemi (pineapple strain Dickeya).This pathogen is highly prevalent in the Malaysian industry with a latent infection charecteristic making it near impossible to detect post harvest.No treatment is available to lessen the number of infected fruit arriving here having been acknowledged by BA to be up to 2%..Infection rates in severe outbreaks must be much larger then this with Malaysia reporting losses of 40% in field.

To the best of my knowledge the Hawaiian industry are the most recent recipients of this pathogen.Researchers from the University of Hawaii and Malaysia have said it would be "grossly irresponsible" to allow the importation of fresh fruit from Malaysia to Australia while knowing the devestation this pathogen has caused in all countries it has been introduced. Hawaiian researchers have also reported a potential for this pathogen to devestate the maize/corn and nursery industries.

My oponion is that the risk rating BA have come up with in the IRA can not be quantified and is completely wrong. Gaps in the science have been identified, understanding of pineapple growing and harvest practices is very limited and how the entire industry operates is not grasped at all well by BA . With this taken into account how can they possibly come up with concise and accurate risk assessments.

While we **do not** have this pathogen in Australia why would we knowingly introduce it with imports from Malaysia to risk our own industry which can completely cater for the Australian consumption demand.I can see no public good coming from this decision and potentially a massive cost to taxpayers for an eradication/compensation program not disimillar to the citrus cankar problem encountered not so long ago.

Food security and the ability of our farmers to feed Australia is set to become a major issue. As a nation we do not need to add further risk to this ability by making decisions lacking in scientific evidence and industry understanding to allow imports of product to our shores.BA in my opinion do not have the appropriate data to justify the position they have put our industry in through this IRA from Malaysia.
Where science is lacking further research is required and this should certainly not be at the cost or responsibility of the local industry.

If any further assistance is required I am more than willing to oblige.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Fullerton.