Submission to Senate Inquiry by Pinata Farms

The effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapple from Malaysia

About Pinata Farms:

Pinata Farms is an Australian owned family business which has been growing pineapples in North and South Queensland over three generations since 1961. Pinata has become one of the largest suppliers of fresh pineapples to the Australian market and supplies both major retailers year round.

The business has been built around the ability to produce high quality, disease free fruit 12 months a year to satisfy demand for Australian grown fruit in fresh form and has been successfully maintaining that quality for three generations.

Submission

Disease management is a significant effort and this country is fortunate not to have Erwinia chrysanthemi (Dickey asp.) present in any form. This disease is highly destructive to pineapple crops and, if established, will also be extremely difficult to control let alone eradicate. Indeed, Plant Health Australia identified Erwinia chrysanthemi (Dickey asp.) as a High Priority Emergency Plant Pest in 2008. (National Biosecurity Plan for the pineapple industry fact sheet – June 2008)

It seems clear from the information and opinion put forward by DAFF that this disease will find entry to Australia if imports of fresh pineapple from Malaysia are allowed. Any pathogen, already identified by PHA as a High priority Pest and that has the capability of affecting 40% of a crop is **highly dangerous** and if not naturally present, **should not be allowed entry to the country in question**.

Pinata Farms believes that this disease represents a serious threat to the Australian pineapple industry and does not agree that DAFF should support imports of fresh pineapples from Malaysia because it considers the risk of transmission and onward distribution to be LOW. There is little scientific evidence for this assertion and in fact, it seems that the very lack of scientific evidence has led DAFF to consider the likelihood of transmission to be low risk when surely the lack of evidence means that no imports should take place due to the unknown risk of transmission.

We do not have the disease now, so why take the risk?

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