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## **Banana import decision raises red flag for farmers**

The NSW Farmers' Association has raised concerns over the decision by Biosecurity Australia to allow the proposed importation of bananas from the Philippines into NSW.

NSW Farmers' Association Horticultural Committee Chair Peter Darley believes the decision may wreak havoc on the State's valuable banana industry.

"What the Biosecurity Australia decision appears to fail to consider is the significant risk of pest incursions or disease outbreaks that may occur due to the importation of foreign bananas from the Philippines," Mr Darley said.

"Our concern is that such risks may not be able to be effectively managed, and an outbreak could spell economic catastrophe for the State's \$60 million banana industry," Mr Darley said.

The Association's comments come following a call by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Ian Macdonald, for the Federal Government to look into the role of Biosecurity Australia in the proposed importation.

"The Association has long advocated the need for tighter restrictions regarding the importation of bananas, and we certainly welcome the support provided by Minister Macdonald on this issue," Mr Darley said.

"The Association has already voiced its concerns with the proposed introduction of bananas from the Philippines to the Import Review Analysis Appeals Panel.

"We all know the impact disease outbreaks can have, and our banana industry is valuable – we need to ensure that it is protected," Mr Darley concluded.

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