

# Submission to Senate Inquiry Regarding the importation of Fresh Decrowned Pineapple from Malaysia

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Les Williams I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation pineapple grower from Wamuran Queensland.

The concerns I have with this IRA are as follows

The pathogen *Erwinia chrysanthemi* (pineapple strain Dickeya) was listed by industry with Plant health Australia in our (the pineapple industry) Bio security deed as our number 1 incursion/bio security threat and this IRA is going to allow fruit in from a country with this disease to export here. This pathogen has a latent infection characteristic which makes it very difficult to detect post-harvest. There are no post-harvest treatments that will lessen the incidence of infected fruit arriving here.

There are clear gaps in the science/knowledge around this pathogen. The host range is largely unknown, as no recognised studies have been done. It seems that if the study has not been done it must be OK. No science does not mean that is not a threat. There are also gaps in the science around possible pathways/vectors for the transfer/spread of this disease. Work has been done elsewhere but not here with Australian fauna and flora. Once again the lack of science seems to make it Ok.

This in my opinion is a high risk strategy. What is the role of BA here? Is it to protect our country from pest incursion? If so, should it not be the case that they, BA or the proponent fill these gaps in the science/knowledge. It seems at the moment that this responsibility falls on industry, Why? I do not see the value in industry using its limited resources to fund studies on pest and diseases we don't have. If there are concerns around the lack of evidence in some of these areas, should it not be the responsibility of BA or the applicant to fill the gap and imports are denied until the gaps are filled. Industry would have to engage scientists offshore to carry out the necessary studies as it can't be done here as we don't have the disease.

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BA also mentions that 2% of fruit arriving here may be infected. Given this and the fact that vector pathways and host ranges are not fully known, and it will cause up 40% losses, once here it would prove very difficult and very expensive to both industry and Government to eradicate. The study on latency was carried out in 1975 on processing fruit, one study, given the age of the study and the fact it was done on fruit destined for a processor, I am not that this is "good science" for this assessment, given the different harvest maturity of fruit destined for 2 very different markets.

This raises the question how much do BA know about pineapple? Growing, harvest practices, maturity standards and how the industry operates. This would surely be necessary information to understand some of the risks?

There is no mention of what is critical mass in terms of at what point is the consignment rejected, is it 5% infection 10% or is that left up to market forces. If a consignment is to be disposed of how will it be done, is infected fruit disposed of in normal waste streams?

I do not know if these are considerations that are used in an IRA, but I believe they should be as they will affect the likely hood of incursion and spread.

In Summary I have a substantial lack of confidence in this IRA, the lack of knowledge/science around the pathogen, the unwillingness or inability from BA to request or gain the knowledge/science that would give a more complete understanding of the risk of incursion and spread. I find the situation disappointing that the people in charge of this extremely important task are not willing to look further than only the published science and expect growers or industry organisations to fund the studies on pest and diseases we don't have, because we don't have them here this means doing the study offshore, not in my opinion a good use of industry resources.

I am available if you require any further information

Yours Sincerely

Leslie Williams