The Philippines is one of the top five exporters of bananas, with some 2.85 million metric tonnes exported in 2017.[4]

In 2018, the country produced some 9.36 million metric tonnes of bananas[3] on 447,889 ha[3], with Cavendish cultivars accounting for about 52% of total banana production, Saba (27%) and Lakatan (10%).

At the beginning of the century, as many as 90 cultivars were estimated to be grown for local consumption[5].

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Banana-producing areas

In 2012, more than 80% of the bananas (and 99% of the Cavendish cultivars) were produced on the island of Mindanao, with Davao, Northern Mindanao and Soccskargen as the top regions and Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley and Bukidnon as the top three provinces[6].

The main Saba-producing regions are Davao, Soccskargen and Northern Mindanao on the island of Mindanao, with Davao del Sur, North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte as the top three provinces[7].

The main Lacatan-producing regions are Soccskargen, Davao and Northern Mindanao on the island of Mindanao, with North Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Lanao del Norte as the top three provinces[7].
Production systems

In 2018, more than 4.9 million metric tonnes[^3] of Cavendish cultivars were produced on some 88,667 ha[^8]. Cavendish cultivars are grown in small to large commercial plantations for the domestic and export markets. Export bananas are produced by Filipino-owned firms and multinational corporations. The small- and medium-scale farmers producing bananas for export either sell to multinationals or directly to traders. A small portion of the country’s exports are organic bananas.

Smallholder farmers commonly grow bananas primarily for home consumption in backyard gardens. They grow a diversity of dessert and cooking cultivars depending on their preferences and the ease with which they can be produced.

In small plantations, bananas are grown as monocrops in areas ranging from 2 to 20 hectares. The cultivars are selected based on local consumer preferences, the prevailing agroclimatic conditions and the types of pests and diseases present.

Production constraints

The tropical race 4 strain that causes Fusarium wilt in Cavendish cultivars, was confirmed in 2005[^8]. The isolates had been collected from banana farms in the Davao Region, which occupies the southeastern portion of Mindanao[^9]. TR4 impacts both large commercial growers and smallholder farmers growing Cavendish for the export market[^10].

The extent of the damage in the large Cavendish plantations for export has not been documented, but evidence suggests that the disease has taken a toll. In 2016, the Japanese company Itochu announced that it plans to invest US$57.7 million in its Philippines subsidiary, Dole International Holdings, to increase productivity[^11]. The subsidiary reported a 30% decline in production, to about 540,000 tonnes, between 2012 and 2015. The goal is to raise production to about 850,000 tonnes through irrigation, the planting of more resistant material (most likely GCTCVs) and relocation of farms "to sites with better soil", by which it probably means TR4-free soils.

In 2013, the Mindanao Banana Farmers and Exporters Association, which represents small-scale farmers growing Cavendish cultivars for the export market, has reported that about 5,900 hectares of their members’ aggregate plantation area had been infected, including 3,000 hectares that have been abandoned[^12].

References

1. 2015 data from the World Bank
2. 2011 data from FAOSTAT - Resources/Land
3. Data from OpenSTAT published by the Philippine Statistics Authority
4. Export data from OpenSTAT, published by the Philippine Statistics Authority
7. 2012 data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, CountrySTAT: Volume of production by crop, region and province
11. Itochu to overhaul Asian banana farming for bigger yields in the 21 October 2016 edition of the Nikkei Asia Review.
12. An inconvenient truth about the Cavendish industry in Asia and the Philippines, 10 February 2014

See also on this website
A list of Philippine banana cultivars
Musapedia pages on banana-producing countries:
Australia
Bangladesh
Brazil
Burundi
Cameroon
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cote d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of Congo
Ecuador
Federated States of Micronesia
Ghana
Honduras
India
Kenya
Nigeria
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Rwanda
Taiwan
Tanzania
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