Quarantine pest

A quarantine pest is “a pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled”. The definition is from the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), an international agreement that aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests[1].

An importing country has the right to impose phytosanitary measures for regulated pests only, whether they are quarantine or non-quarantine pests. A regulated non-quarantine pest is defined as “a non-quarantine pest whose presence in plants for planting affects the intended use of those plants with an economically unacceptable impact and which is therefore regulated within the territory of the importing contracting party”.

The IPPC further stipulates that the phytosanitary measures must also not be any more stringent than those presently in place if the pest is already in the country. It is the duty of the importing country to publish and transmit their phytosanitary requirements, which may require consignments to enter through specified points of entry if the imports need to be inspected, treated or accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. The importing country can also “make special provision, subject to adequate safeguards, for the importation, for the purpose of scientific research, education, or other specific use, of plants and plant products and other regulated articles, and of plant pests”.

One of the fundamental principles of the IPPC is managed risk, recognising that there is always a risk of spread and introduction of pests when importing plants and plant products and that importing countries should only institute phytosanitary measures consistent with the pest risk involved.

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Pest risk analysis

See Musapedia page on Pest risk analyses on pests and pathogens of bananas

A pest risk analysis (PRA) is the technical tool used to identify appropriate phytosanitary measures. A PRA may be initiated when “there is an intention to import for selection and/or scientific research a plant species or cultivar not yet introduced that could potentially be a host of pests”. It is the responsibility of the importer to prepare the PRA and to communicate any recommendations from this PRA to the exporter.

In preparing a PRA, a number of factors should be considered including the category of the pest, the economic impact of the pest, the potential for establishment and spread of the pest, and the proposed uses of the plants or plant products. The conclusion of the pest risk management stage will be whether or not appropriate phytosanitary measures adequate to reduce the pest risk to an
acceptable level are available, cost-effective and feasible. If the pest risk is considered unacceptable and there are no measures available to mitigate the risk, then the import can be prohibited. At the other end of the spectrum, if the pest risk is considered negligible, the import may be permitted with few if any phytosanitary measures.

References


External links

Official website of the IPPC
Lists of regulated pests by country

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Page last modified on Tuesday, 28 August 2018 15:22:18 CEST by Anne Vézina.
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