

Date: 6 November 2023

Name: The Pacific organic and ethical Trade Community [POETCom]

**Regarding: FSANZ – Application A1274 Food derived from disease-resistant banana line QCAV-4**

To: FSANZ Chair and Committee Members,

As the peak body for the organic movement in the Pacific, the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community\* is strongly opposed to the approval of this and all genetically modified food.

One of the globally universal foundation principles of organic agriculture is the strict prohibition of GMO seed and planting stock. A premise that has served our movement well in promoting natural production systems that sustain the health of soils, ecosystems and people, by relying on ecological processes, including focus on soil health, biodiversity, cultivar selection, crop rotation, mulching, cover cropping etc. to mitigate reliance on synthetic chemicals and unproven, unnatural technology.

POETCom supports the detailed comments of GE Free NZ in Food and Environment, including that alternative existing non-GM options should be tried first, that this genetic modification could lead to fusarium resistance, and that there is significant risk to human, animal, and environmental safety. We would however take their proposal one step beyond requesting that the 'clock be stopped', and strongly recommend that A1274 GM Banana must be declined, and that Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region remain GMO free.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this important issue. We appreciate the transparency, hope that you all will heed these and similar comments and remain available for follow up discussion.

Respectfully,

\* POETCom is a membership organisation and the peak body for organic agriculture in the region and manages the Pacific Organic Standard and Guarantee Scheme on behalf of the Heads of Agriculture of the Pacific Community. POETCom has over 60 member organisations (organic and agro ecological farmers organisations) across 19 Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

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