



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

Global Agriculture Information Network

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## Philippines

### Agricultural Situation

### Philippine Banana Disease Problem

**2000**

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#### Report Highlights:

**The Philippines is a major banana producer-exporter. Banana disease, however, remains a problem. The International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain-Asia and Pacific Network (INIBAP-ASPNET) will emphasize small farmer production and profitability in the face of various virus diseases some banana varieties are experiencing. The INIBAP-ASPNET will be providing superior banana hybrids. The concept will likely utilize tissue culture techniques and virus indexing in addressing disease management and control.**

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Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Manila [RP1], RP

## **Executive Summary**

Banana is still the leading fruit grown in the country and the Philippines is the largest banana exporter in Asia today. The growth in area planted, however, remains slow if not stagnant. About 313,000 hectares were planted to the crop in 1991 and by 1995, the area grew to less than 400,000 hectares. Mindanao continues to be the most productive banana growing area and the best commercial farms reportedly are able to produce 4,250 boxes of cavendish bananas per hectare. Each box carries around 13.5 kilos of premium quality fruit.

Several banana virus diseases, however, are eliminating traditional banana varieties in the country. Dr. Agustin B. Molina, regional director of the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain-Asia and Pacific Network (INIBAP-ASPNET), has stated that "INIBAP will put priority in supporting and participating in activities that will improve banana production and profitability of small holder farmers,".

Dr. Molina reported that through its International Musa Testing Program, INIBAP has identified superior banana hybrids that are ready to be disseminated to small farmers. To complement this are disease management techniques that have been identified and are currently available for field testing and packaging. In a paper presented at the Philippine National Research and Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries-International Agricultural Research Forum held recently, Dr. Molina stated that "the tissue culture technology, coupled with virus indexing, can play a vital role in a disease management system that may be the key to the rehabilitation of the virus-ravaged smallholder farms in the country,".

Recent surveys have reportedly indicated that many small farmers are now abandoning banana production, particularly those growing the "lakatan" and "bungulan" varieties because of serious diseases such as bunchy top virus and Fusarium wilt. The two are preferred local banana cultivars.