America’s Bananas Can No Longer Be Taken for Granted

Banana Producers Face Mounting Weather, Disease, Production and Cost Challenges

WASHINGTON, DC, VA, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bananas remain America’s most popular fruit, but the reliable supply consumers see in U.S. supermarkets depends on an increasingly challenging production environment in Latin America and cost pressures throughout the supply chain. From rapidly escalating production and transportation costs to extreme weather and disease challenges, today’s supply chain is increasingly under threat.

Banana growers in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Mexico and other producing countries are confronting a combination of extreme and unpredictable weather, increasingly serious plant diseases, rising production costs, water challenges and growing environmental pressures.

"Americans tend to think of bananas as one of the simplest and most dependable foods in the produce department," said Tom Stenzel, Managing Director of the Banana Association of North America. "But producing a banana that can be harvested, packed, shipped thousands of miles and arrive in a U.S. supermarket at an affordable price requires an extraordinarily complex agricultural and supply-chain system. That system is under growing pressure."

The developing 2026 El Niño is adding a significant layer of uncertainty. The World Meteorological Organization said in September that the current El Niño could become the strongest on record and has a near-100% probability of continuing through February 2027. El Niño can produce sharply different conditions across Latin America, including excessive rainfall and flooding in some areas and drought and water shortages in others.

Banana growers throughout Latin America are battling disease pressures, including Black Sigatoka, a fungal disease that attacks banana leaves and reduces the plant's ability to produce fruit. Even more concerning is Fusarium Tropical Race 4 (TR4), a soil-borne disease capable of killing banana plants. Growers are facing increasingly higher costs to manage these diseases, including prevention, detection, field containment, research and the development of resistant varieties.

At the same time, production costs for fertilizers, plastics, cardboard cartons and pallets have

rapidly increased in 2026. Escalating fuel costs are straining the banana supply chain due to the Iran war, whether in bunker fuel for ocean shipping or diesel fuel delivering bananas from US ports throughout the country. Diesel fuel is now topping $6.20 a gallon, up 76% from $3.52 at the beginning of the year.

The challenges facing banana growers underscore the importance of maintaining a healthy, economically sustainable supply chain. "Consumers should not take the availability of inexpensive bananas for granted," Stenzel said. "The fact that Americans can walk into virtually any supermarket and buy bananas year-round at an affordable price is a remarkable achievement, but one that is increasingly under threat due to production and cost pressures."

Government policymakers, retailers and consumers all need to recognize the importance of continued investment in banana production and a sustainable supply chain. "The banana industry is working every day to make sure that the next generation of Americans can enjoy the same nutritious bananas that previous generations have taken for granted," Stenzel said. "That will require continued innovation, investment and cooperation across the entire banana supply chain."

Tom Stenzel
Banana Association of North America
tom@stenzelgroup.com

This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/946074346

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.
© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.