

# BANANA PRODUCTION: A DISASTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MAKE FRUIT  
FAIR!



Fair Supply Chains.  
Decent Conditions.  
Sustainable Development.

**BananaLink** 

Most bananas exported to Europe are grown on large-scale plantations in Latin America and Africa. Intensive methods of production maximise productivity but cause serious environmental damage including:

- ▶ Contamination of water courses
- ▶ Massive amounts of waste
- ▶ Soil erosion
- ▶ An increased risk of flooding
- ▶ Deforestation and destruction of habitats
- ▶ Destruction of soil fertility requiring high fertiliser use

## Why are chemicals used on plantations?

Banana plantations are monocultures – where only one type of crop is grown. This lack of genetic variety makes plants highly susceptible to pests, fungi and diseases and therefore large quantities of insecticides and other pesticides are applied to the crops. Most plantation owners will spend more money on agrochemicals than on their workforce. Fertilisers and pesticides pollute water channels resulting in fish kills and the destruction of other aquatic life including coral reefs. Carelessly stored chemicals seep into the soil and water courses. Polluted water is used for drinking, cooking and washing.

Likewise, pineapple production is characterised by large scale, monoculture plantations. Growers use 10 or 15 times more herbicides on pineapples than on other crops, and the application of toxic

pesticides is especially tragic in rainforest areas, where heavy rains wash the poisons into nearby water sources.

## Impacts on workers and their communities

Polluted water is used for drinking, cooking and washing. Agrochemicals are applied by hand and aerially sprayed. It is estimated that 85% of chemicals sprayed by plane fail to land on the crop, instead saturating the whole area, including workers, their homes and food. Laws prohibiting workers from being in the fields when spraying takes place are routinely violated in some countries.

*“They spray with the little plane and this affects the workers’ health because there’s no protection. There’s no protection for the women who work packing bananas in the packing plant. They don’t give them gloves, masks, boots... They don’t get given anything like that.”*

**Francisca Criollo**, a nurse on the *Rio Culebra banana plantation, Ecuador*

For plantation workers and local people, the health impacts of extensive agrochemical use are numerous, ranging from depression and respiratory problems to cancer, miscarriages and birth defects.

## Make Fruit Fair!

The Make Fruit Fair! campaign consists of fifteen organizations from Europe working in partnership with four plantation worker unions and small farmer organisations in the Global South. Together we contribute to a global movement for change.

The Make Fruit Fair! campaign is calling on Governments, supermarkets and fruit companies to implement policies that encourage ecologically sound fruit production. In particular, that:

- ▶ there is sustainable use of resources, such as soil and water;
- ▶ producers reduce their dependency on hazardous agrochemicals and increase the use of ecological and sustainable alternatives to agrochemicals;
- ▶ there is respect for biodiversity; and
- ▶ all supply chain actors reduce their carbon footprint.

## What you can do

Sign up to our newsletter to receive progress updates about campaign actions, news from our trade union partners in Latin America and Africa and invitations to take part in urgent online actions.

<http://makefruitfair.org/newsletter/>

### Further information and contact

[www.makefruitfair.org](http://www.makefruitfair.org) – [www.bananalink.org.uk](http://www.bananalink.org.uk)  
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