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Philippine Saba Bananas win repeat orders in New Zealand, boosting export prospects

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Second commercial shipment strengthens market confidence, opening new opportunities for Mindanao growers and export diversification

The Philippines has shipped its second commercial consignment of fresh saba (cardava) bananas to New Zealand, marking another step in the country's efforts to diversify agricultural exports and position indigenous crops in premium overseas markets. The latest shipment, organised by Davao City-based AVANTE Agri-Products Philippines Inc., follows the successful delivery of its inaugural export earlier this year, which has now translated into repeat orders from New Zealand buyers.

Packed in a 40-foot refrigerated container, the shipment comprises 1,400 boxes of export-grade fresh saba bananas destined for Fresh Produce Group NZ Ltd. Each 12-kilogram box was prepared under stringent food safety and phytosanitary standards to ensure product quality throughout the journey. The repeat order reflects growing buyer confidence in Philippine-grown saba bananas, a staple long associated with local cuisine that is now finding a place in international fresh produce markets.

Diversifying export markets

For the Philippines' banana industry, the shipment represents more than another export order. It signals progress in reducing reliance on traditional export destinations while creating new revenue streams for growers in Mindanao, the country's largest banana-producing region. The fruit was sourced from accredited farms in Davao del Norte and processed through certified packing facilities that comply with international food safety and export protocols, highlighting improvements across the

country's fresh produce supply chain.

Department of Agriculture Regional Executive Director Macario D. Gonzaga said the repeat shipment demonstrates the industry's ability to consistently meet international quality requirements. "This second shipment is a testament to the dedication of our farmers, exporters and industry partners in consistently delivering high-quality Philippine saba bananas that meet global standards," Gonzaga said.

Native crops find global opportunities

The export also reflects growing international interest in native Philippine agricultural products as buyers increasingly seek differentiated and premium fresh produce. Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. described the shipment as an encouraging development for both farmers and exporters, noting that expanding market access remains central to the government's agricultural strategy.

"This is welcome news for our farmers and exporters. It proves there is a growing market for high-quality Philippine products overseas," he said.
According to the Department of Agriculture, every new export destination creates opportunities to improve farm incomes, generate rural employment and strengthen the competitiveness of Philippine agriculture.

Building a resilient export industry

Agriculture Undersecretary for Export Philip Young said the New Zealand shipment aligns with the government's broader objective of expanding both export markets and product categories. As global consumers increasingly look for specialty produce with unique culinary appeal, fresh saba bananas have the potential to command higher value while broadening the country's agricultural export portfolio.

The company also credited farmers, exporters, logistics providers and government agencies for supporting the shipment, underscoring the collaborative effort required to build sustainable agricultural export markets. With repeat orders now secured, the success of Philippine saba bananas in New Zealand could pave the way for wider market expansion, offering fresh opportunities for growers while strengthening the country's position in the global fresh produce trade.