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Media release

## **Reach for a banana, not a caffeine drink**

### **High-caffeine and high sugar soft drinks don't deserve the 'energy drink' label**

The recent debate over the supposed attributes of high-caffeine energy drinks has prompted the Australian Banana industry to urge Australians to reach for a banana over one of these drinks for a host of health and energy reasons.

"High-caffeine drinks that have become extremely popular do not deserve the label 'energy drinks' because branding them that way communicates they are good for you when in fact they have an exceptionally high sugar content and deliver an overload of caffeine," says David Chenu, Horticulture Australia Ltd's Domestic Marketing Manager.

Chenu says, "It can be well argued that the best food-for-energy intake for young people can come from a banana because of the banana's incredible natural health and nutrition qualities.

"Comparing a banana with a high-caffeine sugar drink is like comparing chalk and cheese. One is a natural fruit loaded with goodness, but devoid of fat and cholesterol, and the other is loaded with ingredients processed by man to artificially pump the body to make it work harder or stop it from slowing down. The only goodness that we can see in high-caffeine drinks is the water.

"A banana can give you the same pick-me-up feeling as these drinks without the caffeine because of the carbohydrates they contain. At the same time a banana is delivering a host of goodness including protein, fibre, potassium, vitamins A, B6 and C, and folate," Chenu says.

Bananas are low-GI foods, which means their refuelling qualities last a long time. The carbohydrates in a banana are released slowly after consumption prolonging the energy boost that they deliver. When a muscle contracts during exercise it burns the glucose that has been released from the muscle 'fuel tank' called glycogen, which is made from the carbohydrate found in food. If the meals and snacks before physical activity are low in carbohydrate, the muscles become low in glycogen, and you will run out of energy before you have finished.

A responsible approach is to urge all school canteens and parents to play a role in educating our young about managing their energy intake responsibly, so that they will think twice before reaching for a caffeine-based soft drink.

#### **Enquiries**

David Chenu, Horticulture Australia Limited

Tel (02) 8295-2381, Mobile 0419 318 013