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By Fred Searle

Thursday 24th October 2019, 14:16 GMT

Rijk Zwaan launches 'ready-to-eat' melons



Breeder's range of long-shelf-life, ready-to-eat varieties indicate when they should be harvested ensuring they don't have to be ripened at home

Rijk Zwaan has broken new ground with a range of ready-to-eat cantaloupe melons aimed at making the product more convenient for producers and consumers.

The Dutch breeder's long-shelf-life varieties indicate when they have reached 15-16 Brix and should be harvested, either by turning a slightly creamy colour or by developing a ring around their stem.

This helps ensure that when they reach the consumer, they are ripe and ready to eat, with a high enough sugar content – a first for the cantaloupe melon sector.

The range includes six varieties of cantaloupe: Casasol RZ, Paniol RZ and Frivol RZ for production in Spain; 34-506 RZ for Morocco; and Mirandol RZ for Senegal and Spain.

With high resistance to aphids and powdery mildew, the varieties are also suitable for organic production.

Speaking at Fruit Attraction in Madrid, Rijk Zwaan sales representative and crop specialist Juan Francisco Martinez explained that it has traditionally been difficult to tell the optimum moment to harvest cantaloupe and Charentais

melons (a type of cantaloupe). The fruit has therefore been slower to become available in a ready-to-eat format than other products such as avocados and mangos.

Rijk Zwaan's ready-to-eat melons are currently available in Switzerland, Germany and several other European markets.