



By Liam O'Callaghan

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Variety trials go virtual



The Australian Melon Association has adapted its annual field day by sharing videos of new melon varieties online with growers across the country

With movement still restricted because of coronavirus (Covid-19), the Australian Melon Association has shared the latest research and developments with growers via an online video series.

The series features new variety trials that were due to be showcased by seed companies at the 2020 Syngenta Australian Melon Conference and Field Day. The event was originally scheduled to be held in late March in Western Australia but was cancelled because of the pandemic.

Shot on location at Capogreco Farms at Hamel in Western Australia, the video series features five melon variety trial sites by seed companies Syngenta, Seminis, BASF Nunhems, HM Clause and Rijk Zwaan, as well as a highlight compilation video featuring all variety trials.

Dianne Fullelove, industry development manager of Australian Melon Association said seed trials are always a highlight of the biennial conference and field day.

"Making the call to cancel such an important event was difficult but absolutely necessary, and we wanted to make sure that our growers weren't disadvantaged when it came to planning the seasons ahead," Fullelove said.

"Trialing new varieties is an important part of a farmer's efforts to make the most of their growing selection, and we think that the new range of videos filmed by the team at Fireteller, offer a really comprehensive overview of what's on track for release."

Fullelove said the videos, which are available on the industry body's website, highlight the importance of melons to the portfolios of seed companies, as well as some of the impressive results of breeding and trialing programs both in Australia and overseas.

"There are a lot of traditional melon offerings, but also varieties that meet the ongoing demands of the grower, such as aphid resistance and high yield potential, and the interest from consumers for sweetness, keepability and outstanding taste profiles," Fullelove said.

"There's a strong commitment by seed companies to breeding new varieties of melons to meet the growing market for melons in Australia, which puts the industry in good stead," she added.

"Having options when considering what to grow in their production schedules is definitely a great advantage for Australian melon growers, and the industry as a whole is grateful for the support of the seed companies in making these trials so successful."

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