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Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection project

Melon Component Update

Kununurra – 26th April 2024



Themes & Topic Areas

	1. Soil Health	2. Crop Health	3. Optimising Inputs
Melon priorities	<p>Maximise soil health and soil carbon</p> <p>Effective production system management, rotations, biological & soil amendments</p> <p>Reduce soilborne disease pressure in melons.</p>	<p>Encourage beneficial insects through whole-farm approach including rotations, wind breaks, tractor rows</p> <p>Measure and demonstrate benefits of soil health and optimising inputs on crop health.</p>	<p>Reduction, alternatives or elimination of plastics</p> <p>Increasing organic matter through recycling organic waste from melon production systems</p>
Topic Areas	<p>1.1 Cover crops, rotations and minimum till:</p> <p>Equipment and machinery, cropping systems and management, soil biology, and cover crop species and varieties.</p> <p>1.2 Consumer education:</p> <p>Food safety and sustainable production systems</p> <p>1.3 Biology and microbiome:</p> <p>Impact of inputs on biology, pre-biotic cover crops, compost, and pro-biotic inoculants.</p> <p>1.4 Composting and soil:</p> <p>Making compost - equipment, inputs, costs, using different types of compost, benefits and how to measure.</p>	<p>2.1 Integrated Pest and Disease Management:</p> <p>Identification and resources for pest management, beneficials, weeds, diseases including early stages.</p> <p>2.2 Genetics and new varieties:</p> <p>Varietal characteristics and pest and disease resistance.</p>	<p>3.1 Nutrient use efficiency:</p> <p>Optimal nutrition - quality and yield, precision agriculture and variable rate application and nutrient synergies, trace elements.</p> <p>3.2 Waste:</p> <p>Recycling on-farm plastics, alternatives to plastic mulch, value-adding organic waste.</p> <p>3.3 Fuel:</p> <p>Reduced tillage, controlled traffic, emerging technologies and alternative energy sources.</p>



Activity Areas

Activity Area	Purpose
1. Demonstration Sites	Demonstration sites in targeted regions will provide learnings from current research, which is key for industry adoption. Grower in-kind support, and collaboration with VegNET 3.0 will be undertaken.
2. Training & Events	Training activities delivered through a blend of interactive field based and online learning. Events includes linkages with Australian Melon conference and roadshows.
3. Resource Development	Targeted, timely and accessible resources developed with considerable understanding of regional grower needs and changing preferences.
4. Communication	Information will be shared across traditional and online communications channels. This includes linkages with the Melons Australia website and communications, and the SWICP project website and bulletins.



Demonstration sites

- Mildura VIC @ Dawson Melon Co
 - Completed trial: Use of straw mulch to replace plastic
- Griffith NSW @ Rombola Family Farms
- Mataranka NT @ Rombola Family Farms
- Lakeland QLD @ Daintree Fresh
- Western Australia @ TBC



Resources

- Completed:
 - Plastics recycling and alternatives to plastic mulch
(Scan the QR to visit the page and download the factsheet)
- In development:
 - Cucurbits pests, diseases and disorders identification guide
 - Collaboration with Melons Australia
 - Physical guide and online resource
 - Soil-borne disease webinar – identification and management options





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Summary of resources for the melon industry

Handy hints on where to find useful information

If you want to know more about the project or
how to collaborate, please contact

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