



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

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WELCOME NEWS FOR NSW MELON GROWERS

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson has confirmed that following extensive survey and testing, it appears a potentially devastating exotic plant disease has not been introduced into NSW.

“Since the detection of Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) in the Northern Territory last year, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has been working hard to determine if the disease is in NSW,” Minister Hodgkinson said.

“With the cooperation of melon growers, surveillance teams have sampled and tested more than 12,500 melon seedlings, leaves and fruit for the exotic plant disease.

“Samples covered 21 different melon varieties and were taken from farms, nurseries and markets across NSW. To date, all NSW melon samples have returned negative for CGMMV, which is great news for our melon growers.”

CGMMV is a highly contagious plant disease that infects watermelon, cucumber, rockmelon, zucchini, pumpkin, squash, bitter melon, and bottle gourd, spreading easily through a crop by plant contact, contaminated water, mechanical transfer, and even clothing of workers in a crop.

To test for the disease, samples were taken from both plants that were healthy in appearance and those presenting unusual symptoms.

This was done because visual signs of this disease can vary greatly, with some infected plants showing no outward symptoms at different growth stages.

Minister Hodgkinson said the negative result for NSW is not only a relief for melon growers, but it is also beneficial to the national response to eradicate this virus.

“The risk is still present and NSW melon growers need to stay vigilant throughout this growing season and beyond, and ensure the seed they use has been tested.

“As part of the national biosecurity response, seed importation regulations have now changed and all melon seed imported into Australia must be tested for CGMMV,” said Ms Hodgkinson

Leading international CGMMV expert, Dr Aviv Dombrovsky who recently visited some melon growing areas in Australia said that eradication of the disease was possible if the disease has been contained

“This initiative delivers on Goal 1 of the NSW Agriculture Industry Action Plan launched last year – to maintain a responsive and flexible industry.

“This strategic roadmap was developed between industry and the NSW Government and ensures the continued growth of the State’s \$12 billion primary industries sector.”

If growers see anything unusual in their melon crops, report it via the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.

For more information on CGMMV visit the DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.