



Producing **high-quality**
melons to meet
European **consumers'**
requirements



The Brazilian
Melon Project



Bayer CropScience

How it all started

Brazil's melon production is concentrated in the north-eastern states of Rio Grande do Norte and Ceara, which together produce more than 400,000 tons per year. Throughout the whole year melons are produced under excellent climatic conditions, which make them particularly attractive for the European market. Besides complying with different requirements concerning maximum residue levels (MRLs), it is crucial to ensure that the melons are of the highest quality.

Agricola Famosa is one of the largest melon producers, cultivating different kinds of melons exclusively on 4,000 ha. In order to manage the required quality standards in melons exported to Europe, Agricola Famosa contacted Bayer CropScience Brazil in December 2008. With the assistance of the Global Food Chain Team from Bayer CropScience a meeting in Mossoro, State of Rio Grande do Norte, was arranged to involve Bayer CropScience personnel, Agricola Famosa and Frankort & Koning representatives, aiming at establishing a food chain partnership.

What we aim to achieve

The aim of this project is the production of high-quality melons subject to the optimised use of crop protection products in line with an integrated crop management approach. The support given to Agricola Famosa's team of agronomists combined with Bayer CropScience's crop protection expertise enables them to meet the requirements set by the European market regarding MRLs and good-quality fruit.



Who is involved

Agricola Famosa: In the past few years Agricola Famosa has developed into Brazil's largest producer and exporter of fruit, constantly enlarging its markets. In the 2008/09 season they exported more than 73,000 tons of fruit, concentrating mainly on the British, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish markets. In addition to those countries already supplied, Agricola Famosa is also expanding its exports to Dubai, Singapore, Turkey, Russia, the United States, Canada and other countries. By dedicating 4,000 ha of their 18,000 ha of fruit-growing land to melons, Agricola Famosa has become one of the world's largest producers of high-quality melons and watermelons.

Frankort & Koning Group, a Dutch importer and exporter of fruits and vegetables located in Venlo, is supplying its fresh produce throughout Europe. They are aiming to contribute to the food safety requirements of their customers by forwarding the demands to their growers.

Bayer CropScience Ltda. is the Brazilian business of Bayer CropScience. Beyond providing innovative products for crop protection and seeds, Bayer CropScience strives to offer the most suitable crop solutions which are compliant with international standards and meet the producers' needs with regards to quality and cost-effectiveness.



The confidence-building solution

After the initial meeting with Agricola Famosa and Frankort & Koning in January 2009, as a first step, joint field residue trials were agreed upon. Bayer CropScience experts accompanied the trial phase during March and April and samples were retained during the whole crop growing cycle. These samples were then sent to a GPL certified laboratory, committed to international standards, for analysis.

An increasing problem limiting melon production is pests, which cause damage to the crop. The major pests in melons in the north-east region are the leaf miner and the whitefly. Innovative crop protection products provided by Bayer CropScience control the infestation. Further to applying effective products, it is crucial to balance the different products to manage resistances and build a solution that is sustainable for years.

Based on the convincing results the advisers from Bayer CropScience and the technical experts from Agricola Famosa established a customised crop protection programme, in order to meet the high-quality requirements of the European market, local regulations and good agricultural practices. Moreover, Bayer CropScience trained Agricola Famosa's field staff in the safe use and optimised application technology of crop protection products in line with integrated crop management.





What we achieved

Since the establishment of the food chain partnership project, the melons exported by Agricola Famosa have fully satisfied the quality requirements of the European consumers. The harvested melons in this project have a more uniform size and colour, which are key parameters of high-quality melons. This has strengthened the company's reputation as one of the world's top melon producers and one that meets retailers' quality requirements. This partnership between Agricola Famosa and Frankort & Koning Group has turned into a successful operation, which has resulted in both sides being satisfied with the outcome. Furthermore, it positively contributes to the reputation of Brazil as an exporter of healthy and fresh produce.

Next steps

The involved partners agreed to intensify the established cooperation through exchange of expertise in order to fulfil the quality requirements of tomorrow.



Ariana Carvalho Pinto
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Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food chain partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



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