

2002 Seedless Watermelon Trials Aid Grower Decisions

Issue

In recent years, seedless watermelons increasingly have become the choice of consumers, making the seedless varieties more commercially profitable for melon growers than the seeded ones. But which varieties perform best under Delaware growing conditions?

What has been done?

Studies at the University of Delaware have demonstrated the practicality and advantages of commercial seedless watermelon production. Watermelons are tested for yield under Delaware conditions, comparing varieties for factors such as incidence of hollow heart, sugar content, general appearance, and rind thickness.

Impact

In 12 years, seedless watermelon acreage has grown from zero to 1,300 acres-48 percent of the watermelons grown in Delaware are seedless varieties. Delaware is currently 9th in watermelon production in the U.S. Watermelons are important to Delaware's fresh market vegetable industry. Currently, 28 percent of Delaware's \$33.6 million fresh market vegetable cash receipts are from watermelons. Seedless watermelons contribute 15 percent of these dollars. From 1999-2001 seedless production has increased by 96 percent each year, while seeded acreage remains constant. The increase in the number of seedless acres, combined with improved yields, have resulted in a \$3.2 million dollar increase in profit for Delaware growers during this 3-year period.

Margo: I have the other info already in the system. Just check statement