

MEDIA RELEASE

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Commercial crops to benefit NT economy

Australian melon grower 'Greenview Farm Pty Ltd' has been announced as the successful commercial horticultural company which will undertake broad-acre farming activities on 200 hectares of land at the Douglas Daly Research Farm. Greenview Farm directors Jamie and Maria Schembri bring vast experience in agriculture and horticultural production and access to established markets.

Jamie said, "we have been looking to further expand our operations in the Northern Territory to develop more winter production of melons and trial new produce. This provides the ideal opportunity to lengthen and strengthen winter supply windows into our key domestic and export markets, including NZ and Singapore."

Greenview Farm will also be growing an additional 65 ha of watermelons under licence at Ebenezer Waters on Ooloo Road which is expected to provide between 6000 and 7000 tonnes of melons to be produced in the combined areas all requiring local hand harvesting, grading and transport to market.

"We will be seeking to engage a local workforce, and work with local organisations and Indigenous groups and enterprises to get involved and develop new skills and competencies to contribute to the ongoing expansion of the important NT melon industry" said Jamie.

NT Land Corporation (NTLC) in consultation with the Department of Primary Industry and Resources, identified approximately 6% of under-utilised land within the 3100 hectares of the Douglas Daly Research Farm. The 200 ha portion of land has been released for farming activities under licence for a period of three years with an option to renew for another two years.

NTLC Project Officer Nicole Paas said, "Douglas Daly Research Farm research and other activities will continue to operate and take place on the remaining 2900 ha of land, which is not included under this licence."

"NT Land Corporation has also been working closely with NT Farmers Association (NTFA) to assess suitability, accessibility and the commercialisation potential of current and future agricultural land releases across the Territory and to enable the development of the NT's agribusiness sector" said Ms Paas.

NTFA CEO Paul Burke said that one of the biggest challenges we have to agricultural development in the NT is access to land that is suitable for broadacre cropping activities. The Douglas Daly region has an established reputation for farming enterprises and there is suitable access to water with some onsite infrastructure already available.

"This under-utilised section of Douglas Daly Research farm will now allow for significant jobs to be created in the region, giving a boost to local businesses and input suppliers. It is expected the production may lead to an extra 30 seasonal positions and a number of full-time positions in the Northern Territory.

Work is expected to start on the property during April preparing the ground for planting crops this dry season.

NT Farmers welcomes the utilisation of surplus land for agricultural production in a commercial transaction that delivers real benefits to the Northern Territory community.”

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