

Tips for running a trial on your farm

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With so many new variety options coming online, you may want to consider running a trial on your farm. Trials can be simple or complex, but they can produce long-lasting benefits to your farm if it helps you identify the best varieties to grow where you are located.

Tips & Tricks

There is considerable variability of performance of the individual varieties in different environments and management regimes, so the first step is to thoroughly research your selected trial and speak to other growers about their experiences.

Understand what you are seeking to achieve, whether it is disease resistance, greater yield, improved fruit or brix and create a way of measuring outcomes.

Decide what row spacing is required, and what pest and disease management will be required. Factors such as disease incidence can be tricky to measure, so consider leaf sampling, insect traps and protein analysis as part of your trial.

It can be tempting to rely on visual results, but some products can make a plant look green without actually improving its health, and this can lead to misleading results.

Next, select your plot. The best practice is to select several trial blocks, however if you are using just one trial patch, ensure that it is indicative of your farm.

Be aware of the 'edge effect' – environmental conditions can vary significantly for plants on the edge, versus the innermost rows.

It is also important that your trial plot is clearly marked as it is not unheard of for growers and their staff to forget where one variety starts and the other begins, especially when the physical characteristics are similar.

Lastly, don't forget to record what you did, when, and what your results are!



More resources:

Passionfruit Growing Guide 2011 available to buy at www.passionfruitaustralia.org.au for Association Members only

How to conduct your own field trial, NSW DPI available at:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/41636/Field_trials.pdf

What Can Variety Trialing Do for Your Vegetable Farm? available at:

smallfarms.cornell.edu/2019/04/what-can-variety-trialing-do-for-your-vegetable-farm

The Grower's Guide to Conducting On-farm Variety Trials available at

seedalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Growers-guide-on-farm-variety-trials_FINAL_Digital.pdf