

Sarah Denkler  
Horticulture Specialist  
June 2010

## **MELCAST**

Missouri is now hosting three sites in the southern portion of the state designed to help melon growers determine the correct days to spray.

Lincoln University has graciously provided funding to host three MELCAST hubs in Missouri. The three host sites are in Fortuna, Missouri, Rich Hill, Missouri and Hornersville, Missouri. For melon growers living within a 25 mile radius of these sites, you will be able to access data, at no charge, to help you determine when to spray for Anthracnose, Gummy Stem Blight and Alternaria Leaf Blight.

The MELCAST system was developed at Purdue University and has been in use for 10 years in Indiana. This system is a guide to help determine spray applications on melons. In some instances it has reduced the number of yearly fungicide applications on vines. The importance of this system is in the money saved from reduced applications and in the added peace of mind that you have with a guide that will help ensure your application timing.

Growers can either call the access number, 800-939-1604, or go online at MELCAST.info to utilize the system. Growers access the system on the day they spray melons to retrieve the EFI (Environmental Favorability Index) number. The numbers will be different for watermelon and for muskmelon. A value of 35 is added to the EFI for watermelon and a value of 20 is added to the EFI for muskmelon in order to determine the next spray day. If the EFI was 22 on the day the grower sprayed watermelon then the grower would spray again when the EFI is 57. This calculation is obtained by adding 22 and 35 together.

If overhead irrigation is applied then add 2 EFI units for each day that irrigation is used. Also spray no more than 14 days after the last spray application. For more information go online at MELCAST.info or call the extension office at 573-686-8064.

**University of Missouri Extension programs are open to all.**