

SALAD MIX FIELD DAYS

a snapshot summary

Lefroy Valley's biennial salad mix field day was held at Peter Lowe's Carrum Downs farm on Thursday/Friday the 15th & 16th of April. It was a great 2 days with perfect weather conditions especially on the Friday, enabling growers to see the latest genetics from European & Asian breeders as well as have a yarn & sausage sizzle. This has become an increasingly popular event (LV & Bejo seeds had the inaugural event in 2008) with both seed companies & growers alike. In all around 40 different companies were represented by nearly 100 people over the 2 day event!

Lefroy Valley's main emphasis was Pop Vriend's latest spinach lines (21) out of Europe as well as some interesting new chinese greens lines for both baby leaf & bunching & new genetics in fancy lettuce & baby beet lines.

In the spinach section Carmel (Pf 1-11) & Ashley (Pf1-10) & Waitiki (Pf1-12) all looked terrific, showing great colour, vigour and great leaf characteristics. In fairness to the other commercial lines – Rakaia & Mohaka though, it was late in the season for them so not a fair comparison. The standout new trial varieties were **SPH 90253** (Pf1-11) & **90255** (Pf 1-11- see pics), for the winter slot & **90254** (Pf1-12), **SPH 90251** (Pf1-12) and **SPH 90259** (Pf1-12) to be trialed through the summer / shoulder slots.

Limited trial seed, of the SPH 90253 and SPH 90255 will be made available to major growers in the coming weeks.

Of the new herbs & chinese greens on display, the new cool season wild rocket **HBG 6423** (Presto) and **HBG 8671** were very interesting for growers especially the fact that they had very good vigour, colour & extremely good field tolerance to downy mildew. In these trials & various other field trials throughout the season they have displayed better vigour & less susceptibility to mildew than the current market standards Nature, Pronto and Apollo.

Other interesting new products are **CHG 90349** & **CHG 90273** (both new hybrid tall stem Tatsoi's with very thick, dark green glossy leaf & much better mildew tolerance than standard OP lines). Trials of these lines will be going out to all interested growers as soon as the seed becomes available in August.

Also on display were 3 new hybrid beet lines **BTT5850, 90260 & 90261**. These varieties showed extremely good vigour, very good contrast between leaves and petiole and good leaf uniformity. They also showed as good if not better field tolerance to Cercospora spot versus the current market standard of Lion.

