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Media Release

Today Show takes banana growing to a national audience

Channel 9's Today Show's live weather cross from Cyclone Larry affected banana plantations in the Tully region of far north Queensland brought a national audience the first pictures of bananas coming through after the Cyclone, creating support and excitement for their return to the market as early as mid September.

Involving six live crosses, with additional studio commentary and a live interview with banana ambassador and Melbourne Storm full back Billy Slater, the audience, which peaked nationally at 200,000, were taken into the heart of a banana farm and educated on the banana growing process.

Banana grower Barrie Mackay, whose property and staff were made available for the Today Show broadcast said, "That a banana plant grows from suckers, and the growing cycle takes some nine months depending on growing conditions, is relatively unknown fact among most consumers,"

"It is this lack of awareness that has been at the heart of recent criticisms over the slow return of bananas to the market and the succeeding high prices after Cyclone Larry," he said.

Therefore outlining the banana growing process through sucker growth, harvesting, packing and then to market, the progressive nature of the banana growing cycle was emphasised to the audience.

"Today Show weather presenter, Majella Wiemers, educated Australians about why bananas have taken so long to return to our markets, and why plant growth must be managed to ensure supply can be maintained in the future," said Chief Executive of the Australian Banana Promotions Company, Craig Allen.

According to Allen, the national coverage was an excellent example of growers' "hard earned promotion dollars at work and delivering results."

Viewer feedback to Channel Nine demonstrates the keen interest Australians have in bananas and how anxious they are for supplies and prices to return to previous levels.

At the request of the show's producers an information sheet was posted on the Today Show website to provide further information about bananas and banana growing.

Enquires:

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