

## It's planting week for Rocky Ford Cantaloupe!

Join Rocky Ford Growers Association members for Media Day as they prepare for another sweet & juicy cantaloupe season

Tuesday, April 18, 2017 — The family farmers of the Rocky Ford Growers Association started planting cantaloupe seeds this week. Those amazingly sweet and juicy Rocky Ford Cantaloupes will start rolling into grocery stores across Colorado and surrounding states in mid-July. The ripest cantaloupes are picked daily through the growing season and will go from field to grocery store in about 12 hours.

RFGA members Knapp Farms and Proctor Farms kicked off the planting during what will be a very busy couple of weeks in Rocky Ford as all eight member farms plant their cantaloupe fields. The farm fields have been prepped with a plastic mulch to reduce evaporation, and to provide a barrier between the moist ground and the cantaloupe to keep them from getting wet and rotting. A transplanter pokes in cantaloupe seeds about every foot, where they'll grow into sprawling green vine-like plants that produce those world-famous Rocky Ford melons by late July.

*“These amazingly sweet, juicy melons are available for only a couple of months a year. For generations, people have waited each July for the harvest to hit the stores and the farmers markets. It’s great to get started on the 2017 season,” says Rocky Ford Growers Association president Michael Hirakata.*

The Rocky Ford region grows the sweetest cantaloupe thanks to a perfect combination of blazing hot days and cool nights, along with the fresh, clear Arkansas River water that irrigates the valley. The Rocky Ford Growers Association members are family-owned farms, several of which are being operated by the 5th and 6th generations. RFGA members work together to coordinate planting so that the harvest is staggered and lasts as long as possible.



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**What: Planting day media interviews with RFGA family farmers**

**When: Thursday, April 20, 2017 from 10:30am-Noon**

**Where: Rocky Ford, CO (Call Diane Mulligan for exact location to meet farmers)**

If you are unable to make it to Rocky Ford for Media Day on Thursday, please feel free to download and edit the raw video included in the YouTube link. The video shows how the melon beds are prepped for planting, and also includes interviews describing the soil prep process: 2 interviews in English and 1 in Spanish.





### **ABOUT ROCKY FORD GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

Rocky Ford Growers Association™ is a group of family-owned farms in the Arkansas River valley of southeastern Colorado. Rocky Ford Growers Association™ was formed in 2011 to strengthen and protect the reputation of the cantaloupe, watermelon, and honeydew melon grown in the area. Rocky Ford Cantaloupe™ is officially trademarked to ensure the best and safest quality. For our growers to label their melons as Rocky Ford Cantaloupe™, they must be a member of our association and produce melons within the boundaries of the Rocky Ford growing region: Otero County and Crowley County South of the Colorado Canal.

[rockyfordgrowersassociation.com](http://rockyfordgrowersassociation.com)

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