

Vietnam: Growers profiting from watermelon

Watermelons are coming into season in Vietnam and hundreds of local farmers are enjoying the fruits of their labor. Over the last three years, a state-owned plantation in the southern province of Binh Phuoc has cut down old rubber trees to make room for new ones. While the rubber trees are still young, many local farmers have hired land to grow watermelons.

The melons take between 50 and 60 days from planting to harvest, so each family can grow two to three crops each year. After deducting costs, local growers can make up to hundreds of millions of dong each year.

Each watermelon shipper or picker receives VND150,000 (\$6.7) per day on average, higher than the national rate of \$5.8 in 2015.

From Binh Phuoc, watermelons will be delivered to other provinces across the country and exported to China as well.

Binh Duong's watermelons are favored by many customers as they are grown on the fertile soil of the Central Highlands, providing a lingering sweetness. Some traders said that they have had to make deals with the growers in advance to have enough fruit to export.

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