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| **News Release** | PXXX/YYe  calendar date |

**Tomatoes: science in every seed**

British growers produce over 70,000 tonnes of tomatoes each year, but it would not be possible without seed breeders like BASF | Nunhems who ensure that within each seed is the science to ensure it’ll thrive.

Recently, growers, suppliers, retailers and experts came together at the annual British Tomato Conference to discuss the innovations and collaborations that could secure growth for the sector.

Nasir Ahmed, Consumer and Customer Manager at BASF | Nunhems and the event’s main sponsor, says: “British tomatoes are already available nearly year-round and consumers recognise their flavour, quality and sustainability.

“Increased production has many elements but, as any gardener knows, strong and healthy plants start with good seed.”

Breeding new varieties takes years, sometimes decades, and is extremely expensive. But it is essential to ensuring vegetable and fruit growers can produce affordable, nutritious, high-quality crops that consumers demand.

“Commercial tomato crops in the UK are grown in the protective environment of a glasshouse, but they still face a wide range of challenges,” notes Nasir.

Most recently that challenge has been a virus known as the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV). First identified in 2014, it has affected tomato production across the globe.

“ToBRFV can be devasting and lead to crop losses of 70%,” explains Nasir.

“Fortunately, BASF | Nunhems had been working on resistant varieties for over five years when the initial outbreak happened. We were able to bring new seeds to market that could resist the virus and its effects within a few years,” says Nasir.

Today BASF | Nunhems has over 20 ToBRFV varieties in the marketplace from cherry and cocktail tomatoes to cluster and vine tomatoes. As well as being resistant to ToBRFV, they are renowned for their great flavour, bright colour and shelf life.

“Our work continues. The varieties we’re working on now will be those that are taking on challenges of the next decade – seed breeding is a long-term activity,” adds Nasir.

Each year BASF | Nunhems invests 20-25% of its turnover into R&D. In 2024, the company opened its doors to a Tomato Experience Centre in the Netherlands.

Located on the site of a BASF partner De Bakker Westland, a tomato producer in the region, it is a state-of-the-art hub of innovation and collaboration, and home to over 150 high-tech ToBRFV- resistant varieties.

“At the Tomato Experience Centre, we offer a unique opportunity for stakeholders from across the supply chain to meet and explore the science of tomato cultivation and consumption.

“For our grower partners, this space provides an interactive environment where they can observe and learn about the agronomic practices that shape the quality of their produce. Retail customers are invited to indulge in sensory experiences, exploring the visual appeal and taste profiles of various tomato varieties.

“By bringing together growers, retailers, and our team, we foster meaningful dialogue around the challenges and opportunities facing the industry today, ensuring a collaborative approach to driving innovation and growth,” says Nasir.

As the industry continues to evolve, BASF | Nunhems remains at the forefront, investing in cutting-edge research and development to ensure that every seed contains the science to succeed. With its Tomato Experience Centre serving as a hub of innovation and collaboration, the company is well placed to support the British tomato industry meet the growing demand for home grown produce.

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**Notes to editors:**

**About BASF**

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Around 111,000 employees in the BASF Group contribute to the success of our customers in nearly all sectors and almost every country in the world. Our portfolio comprises six segments: Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, Surface Technologies, Nutrition & Care and Agricultural Solutions. BASF generated sales of €78.6 billion in 2021. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchange in Frankfurt (BAS) and as American Depositary Receipts (BASFY) in the U.S. Further information at [www.basf.com](https://www.basf.com/global/en.html).

**About BASF’s Agricultural Solutions division**

Farming is fundamental to provide enough healthy and affordable food for a rapidly growing population while reducing environmental impacts. Working with partners and agricultural experts and by integrating sustainability criteria into all business decisions, we help farmers to create a positive impact on sustainable agriculture. That’s why we invest in a strong R&D pipeline, connecting innovative thinking with practical action in the field. Our portfolio comprises seeds and specifically selected plant traits, chemical and biological crop protection, solutions for soil management, plant health, pest control and digital farming. With expert teams in the lab, field, office and in production, we strive to find the right balance for success – for farmers, agriculture and future generations. In 2021, our division generated sales of €8.2 billion. For more information, please visit [www.agriculture.basf.com](https://agriculture.basf.com/global/en.html) or any of our social media channels.