



By Maura Maxwell

Monday 17th December 2018, 9:23 GMT

## High expectations for NH Kissabel campaign

Producers are reporting good quality for the 2018/19 harvest in Europe and the US



Deutsches Obstsorten Konsortium's Dirk Zabel

**K**issabel apple marketers are reporting a strong start to the 2018/19 Northern Hemisphere season thanks to an excellent quality crop and high levels of interest from retailers in Europe and the US.

Ifored, the consortium of producers behind the range of red-fleshed cultivars, said the results of the first marketing tests had been positive, while the harvests in France, Switzerland, Germany, the UK, Spain, Italy and the US had all concluded successfully between October and November.

The harvest in Germany has been great, according to Dirk Zabel, head of variety innovation at Deutsches Obstsorten Konsortium.

"We were very pleased by the excellent quality of this year, especially for the Kissabel Red, which was really good both in colour and taste," said Dirk Zabel, head of variety innovation at Germany's Deutsches Obstsorten Konsortium.

"The first tests with German retailer Edeka gave very good feedback and we have very high expectations for all the Kissabel varieties, as we are going to plant more trees in the following years".

The UK harvest was equally positive, according to Robert Jarvis of Greenyard Fresh. He said the current UK focus is on Kissabel Yellow and Orange, as the climate is ideal for producing these apples with good inner colour.

"Harvested first, Kissabel Orange will be marketed as an autumn or pre-Christmas product. With both an excellent eating quality and high storage potential, Kissabel Yellow will fulfil the sales period of Christmas and the New Year," he said, adding that the crop had been received positively by a range of UK retailers including Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, Coop and Aldi.

Production is also increasing in France. "We didn't get a commercial crop yet, but

we got good feedback from trials and visits during the harvest 2018," said Frederic Aubert, technical manager Blue Whale.

"2019 will be our first season with a production of about 200 tonnes and it will allow us to really start commercial tests of Kissabel in France."

In Switzerland, meanwhile, Jeanne Giesser of Fenaco Leman Fruits said the 2018/19 harvest had yielded good quality fruit that had been well received by customers.

"In Italy we had a good harvest of the Kissabel Red, both in term of quality and yield," Luca Lovatti of Novamela said.

"We are still gaining experience in terms on agronomy and storability. We want to deliver to our consumer the best experience in term of colour in combination with texture and taste."

In Spain, Josep Maria Benet of Nufri said

the company was focusing on Kissabel Red,

needed horticulture for red fleshed

2021 so we will have the first fruit on the

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trialling the variety at different altitudes and climatic conditions to find the best growing area.

On the other side of the Atlantic, production is also on the rise. “We continue to refine the

varieties. We have made some exciting discoveries that have improved how Kissabel varieties respond in our climate,” said Dale Goldy of NBT Coop.

“We will begin commercial plantings sometime around

market in 2023 or so.”

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