By Mike Knowles

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**Italian launch for Chiquita Fruit Bar**

Company aiming to open 200 stores in the country within the next five years, starting in the principal Italian cities

International fresh produce marketer Chiquita has revealed plans to roll out its chain of Chiquita Fruit Bar convenience retail outlets in Italy.

The stores, which will sell fruit salads and salads made to order, as well as smoothies, pure-fruit ice cream and other fresh convenience items, are due to open later this year.

*The aim is to open around 10-15 flagship kiosks in the principal Italian cities in the first year of operation,* explained Ruggero Rovelli, who is heading up the project.

*From there we will then start branching out our devlopment across the country, which hopefully will allow us to reach around 200 sales outlets in the next five years.*

Already a common sight in a number of cities in northern Europe – notably Germany, Belgium and Switzerland – as well as having a presence in Dubai, the Chiquita Fruit Bar chain has the potential to introduce something new to the Italian market.

*We're going to offer Italy a new, cheerful, fresh and natural way to consume and enjoy fruit in all corners of cities and commercial centres,* Rovelli continues.

Paolo Prudenziatì, Chiquita's vice-president for south Europe and the Middle East, said he was confident the stores could do well in the Italian market.

"The Chiquita brand has been present in Italy for more than 50 years and is the undisputed leader when it comes to the banana segment." he commented.

"What Chiquita Fruit Bar has to offer coincides perfectly with the kinds of characteristic – naturalness, taste, expertise and quality – that the Italian consumer attaches to the brand."