New-season kiwifruit should be ready to harvest in the north of Italy next week and in central Italy at the start of November, according to the Kiwifruit of Italy Consortium. The organisation, which represents nine of the country’s leading kiwifruit exporters, said its monitoring of sugar levels in various parts of Italy enabled them to predict the right time to begin harvesting with greater certainty and offer the sector a better chance of a co-ordinated start to the season than was the case prior to its establishment a couple of years ago.

“The checks carried out during week 42 have so far confirmed that the ripening process of Hayward kiwifruit is substantially similar to that of last year” said Alessandro Fornari, the consortium’s president.

“The parameters measured in the different growing areas in the north of Italy during week 42 gave values of sugar content around 5 degrees Brix (0.5 higher than last week) and detected a drop in firmness, suggesting that the ripening process has begun,” he explained.

“The parameters measured during the first monitoring of the growing areas in the centre of Italy started during week 42, gave values of sugar content around 4.6 degrees Brix, in line with the period.”

Forecasts indicate that minimum temperatures have already started to fall in the north of the country, something which encourages the ripening process.

As far as shipments are concerned, Fornari indicated that fruit exported by Kiwifruit of Italy members to overseas markets would begin in the first week of November and those to European destinations would start moving a week later.

In the meantime, Kiwifruit of Italy has made its database of ripening data available on its homepage, allowing interested parties to follow the progress of kiwifruit ripening in Italy’s different growing areas.

The consortium is due to publish an update on souther Italian kiwifruit ripening at the start of next week.

Production in the north of the country expected to be ready for shipment to overseas markets during the last week of October