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Kissabel SH takes commercial strides

Australia and Chile are leading the way as the apple edges closer to commercial development in the Southern Hemisphere



Kissabel apple production in the Southern Hemisphere is progressing well, according to ifored project partners.

From February to April, in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile and Argentina, the cultivar assessment phase is continuing for those being grown under the brand's umbrella.

Australia is already seeing a forthcoming marketing season for Kissabel, according to Rowan Little, general manager at Montague Fresh.

"We have been really encouraged by the quality of most of the series under test in Australia," he said. "All of the varieties have exhibited a pleasant range of orange/salmon coloured skin with attractive deep-pink to red internal colour and very attractive white lenticel on most as well."

Montague is working on branding too, according to Little: "This year we have

invested in the development of Kissabel fruit stickers and trays to build brand awareness when we share Kissabel with our customers, retailers and media, in order to get them excited for future seasons."

In Chile, Unifrutti has also reported a good crop. "Despite the reduced availability of water and high summer temperatures resulting from climatic change we had a nice Kissabel crop with excellent skin pigmentation and beautiful, intense red colours inside," said production manager Riccardo Gatti. "Hopefully, we are going to start marketing the next season."

New Zealand is making progress, with a good colour development, according to Paul Paynter of Yummy Fruit Company.

"We have our first crop here," he said. "Quality is very good from young trees. We will carry on with tests for one or two more seasons, so commercial launch

is five years away. The goal is to have a sweeter selection for Asia as this region represents now about 50 per cent of our exports."

Argentina is also in the test phase, with promising results. "During this season we have noticed that the fruits have a greater level of acidity, therefore we have opted for late harvests, in order to better balance the flavour," Moño Azul's Nicolas Sanchez outlined. "We have high expectations for some varieties of red pulp and envisage terminating the evaluation phase with the next harvest."

The evaluation phase in South Africa is continuing even though phytosanitary quarantine, until now, has allowed for the entrance of few plants.

"No commercialisation has been planned at this point," confirmed Tanith Freeman, product development manager at Dutoit Group. "Two of the varieties evaluated are looking promising and show potential."