

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Mike Knowles

Thursday 26th August 2021, 12:19 GMT

New apple varieties on sale in spring

Vog predicts "balanced" campaign for new crop, as commercial debut beckons for Cosmic Crisp, Giga and RedPop



A picker inspects newly harvested Royal Gala apples in South Tyrol

The first European-grown crop of three new licensed apple varieties – Cosmic Crisp, Giga and RedPop – will go on sale in early 2022, it has been confirmed.

Italian-grown Cosmic Crisp are expected to reach the market some time in February, Fruitnet understands, marketed by two South Tyrolean companies, Vog and VIP.

Giga and RedPop are set to make their commercial debut in early spring, most likely from March onwards. Also grown in South Tyrol, these will be sold exclusively by Vog.

"The idea is to provide consumers with top-quality apples during the second half of the season," says Hannes Tauber, head of marketing at Vog. "These varieties store really well, which helps us to deliver great-tasting fruit throughout the season."

Harvest already underway

Despite frosts in the spring of 2021 and an anticipated increase in apple production across much of Europe, Vog is expected a fairly balanced campaign in terms of sales this season.

Italy's production is forecast around 4 per cent down on last season, and harvesting – already underway since mid-August with the Gala variety – is running about seven days later than usual.

"The European crop for the season which has just ended was relatively small, so conditions were favourable for us to dispose of our product at a uniform rate throughout the year," explains Vog sales manager Klaus Hölzl.

"We had to reckon with Covid again this year, but its effects were less dramatic than in 2019-2020, while on the non-EU market we had to overcome difficulties such as the low availability of containers, the closure of the Suez Canal

and, last but not least, Brexit in the UK."

As the 2021/22 commercial campaign begins, Vog expects a slight reduction in its own crop, which is predicted to be approximately 500,000 tonnes this year.

Average sizes will be smaller than last season, when they were in fact larger than normal.

Europe-wide, the forecast is for a total increase in production of 10 per cent compared with last year.

"The harvest will also be an average of one week later, and fruit sizes smaller, right across Europe. Output will be higher, but still well below the record crops of 2018," Hölzl comments.

"What's more, once you deduct the product intended for industrial use, the quantity available for the fresh fruit market will presumably be similar to that of last year, and this points to a fairly well balanced sales season."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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In terms of varieties, Vog's crop will apparently include good quantities of Royal Gala, Golden Delicious and Fuji. In addition, output of licensed club apples Envy, Yello and Kanzi continues to grow.

As well as the first commercial quantities of RedPop, Giga and CosmicCrisp, production of Joya and Crimson Snow, already present on the market, will increase.

According to Vog chief executive Walter Pardatscher, the upward trend for these new varieties confirms

that the consortium's varietal innovation programme is proceeding well.

"Our ambitious plan to expand our assortment with innovative varieties tailored to the demands of new consumers is intended to offer the right apple for all needs and tastes," he explains. "All this is only possible thanks to our innovative and passionate producers."

The outlook for the coming season is also positive for Vog's organic production, with good quality predicted for organic Royal Gala apples – even though sizes will be smaller and yields lower due to the spring frost.

As a result of a 7 per cent rise in apple orchard acreage, Vog's organic crop will expand to 32,000 tonnes for the coming season.

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