



By Tom  
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## French kiwifruit up to challenge

French marketer Primland is confident of its ability to adapt to new challenges, as it looks to take advantage of kiwifruit's growing popularity



As the new season starts, the list of challenges facing French kiwifruit producers and exporters is a lengthy one, from Covid-19 to weather extremes, in addition to the race against time to develop non-plastic packaging alternatives.

However, Jean-Baptiste Pinel, managing director of Primland, believes the French marketer's long experience can make the difference.

"The challenges are various," he says, "including Covid safety measures, efforts to protect the orchards from climatic extremes, research into new packaging and availability of labour. Combined with logistical issues in maritime transport, you can understand how under pressure our industry is. But we remain confident, as Primland is used to change, and has succeeded in adapting every time."

The pandemic forced the company to adopt new ways of working and Pinel

says that Primland is determined to continue following these procedures. Next year's new law on plastic packaging has also demanded a rethink on packaging, while efforts to protect against the weather have been going on for decades.

"Our orchards have been protected against the frost for the past three decades so we capably fought off the low temperatures of last winter," he says. "In addition, more and more of our orchards have nets to protect against excess winds and hail."

Sales of Oscar Gold and Oscar Red kiwifruit started in mid-October, with the green variety being harvested at the end of October. Although stocks of New Zealand kiwifruit remain on the market, Italian production is predicted to be lower than last season.

"Generally speaking, the consumption of kiwifruit is increasing in all segments, gold, green, red and also Nergi kiwiberries," says Pinel. "Primland's

ability to offer the full range means we can satisfy all kiwifruit consumers' tastes, as well as their favourite ways of eating the fruit. Because there is some variation between production areas, we are continuing to develop partnerships with growers in Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal to complete our offer and ensure we can supply all our customers."

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