Suppliers unveil new 'Garden of Innovation' venture

Bakkavor and Hammond Produce will produce rare varieties of vegetables and salad for new prepared produce range

Rare and unusual produce varieties are being grown on a commercial scale for the first time under a new partnership between prepared produce supplier Bakkavor and Nottingham-based grower Hammond Produce.

The 15-acre ‘Garden of Innovation’ will see little-known varieties such as Yukina savoy, red kale, purple cauliflower and red sprouts brought to market by the end of this year.

In total, the site will grow and showcase over 50 speciality varieties of root vegetables, herbs and salads, many of which have not been available in the UK on a large-scale commercial basis. A selection of the varieties will form part of a limited edition of fresh prepared food products to be listed in retailers before the end of the year.

Located at Hammond Produce’s site in Arnold, Nottinghamshire, the garden was visited last Friday (14 August) by Defra minister Liz Truss, who said it was a ‘fantastic example of our forward-thinking food industry’.

Ivan Clingan, managing director of Fresh Convenience, Bakkavor, said: “The Garden of Innovation reflects Bakkavor’s fundamental approach of constantly innovating and pushing boundaries through new products, processes, technology or in this case fresh produce. Innovation remains a key driver of our success and leadership in fresh prepared foods.”

Hammond Produce director Jon Hammond added: “This unique initiative showcases the best of British food production and farming working together in an innovative, creative way to address and satisfy changing consumer demands.”