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By Matthew Jones

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T&G commercialises hot climate apple

New red-skinned offering comes from pan-industry breeding programme, focused on long-term sustainability of apple production

T&G Global is set to commercialise the first new apple from the Hot Climate Programme.

The 'HOT84A1' variety has been successfully trialled in Spain, where temperatures regularly reach more than 40°C.

"This apple has proven to be sunburn resistant, while retaining excellent eating qualities," said Peter Landon-Lane, T&G Global's director innovation and technical. "It's a red-skinned, juicy, sweet apple, with a great crunch which we know will appeal to consumers."

The Hot Climate Programme was initiated in 2002 by Plant & Food Research, the Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology (IRTA) and Fruit Futur, an association of the main fruit producers in Catalonia (Actel, Fruits de Ponent, Nufri and Poma de Girona).

The programme develops new apple and pear varieties for high temperature growing areas.

"We know the world's climate is changing and consumers will continue to demand tasty, healthy, safe food that is sustainably produced so T&G Global, along with our partners in the Hot Climate Programme, is preparing for this by developing and commercialising apples that are climate change resistant," said Landon-Lane.

"By breeding innovative new varieties, like HOT84A1, it provides food producers with opportunities to grow apples in regions previously not suitable for production, as well as grow closer to consumer markets."

The programme was formed in response to issues Spanish growers, particularly those in the Catalan region, had been experiencing with traditional varieties; their fruit was increasingly produced with low red colouring, sunburn, soft flesh textures and higher-than-average incidence of storage disorders.

It was recognised that other apple and pear producing regions would begin to experience these issues as the global climate continued to change, meaning the varieties developed for these niche environments would be in high demand worldwide.

T&G Global joined the programme as strategic commercialisation partner in February 2019 and has established a global network of six partners to initially test and commercialise HOT84A1; Waimea Nurseries (New Zealand), TopFruit (South Africa), Dalival (Europe), Worldwide Fruit (UK), Montague (Australia) and Fruit Futur (Spain).

Peter Allderman, TopFruit's pome fruit

to environmental conditions that are likely

"We want to expand the number of

manager, said the programme was particularly exciting for producers in South Africa, where high temperatures and low water availability can result in poor fruit colour, texture and pressure issues.

"Combined with increased pest and disease resistance, we believe these varieties will be highly adapted to be increasingly faced in countries with hot climate," explained Allderman.

Fruit Futur will plant the first commercial volumes of HOT84A1 in the Iberian Peninsula in February 2021, with licenses for other parts of the world expected to follow.

organisations trialling and evaluating the new variety, so we can robustly test it in various global territories," said Landon-Lane. "We welcome expressions of interest from growers and marketers worldwide."