

ASIA FRUIT

For Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Marketing and Distribution in Asia

亞洲鮮果蔬菜銷售及批發的專業雜誌

November/December 2006

www.asiafruitmagazine.com

Thailand discovers it's business as usual

CALIFORNIA CONFIDENT OF HIGH-QUALITY NAVEL CROP

CORPORATE FARMING GAINS GROUND IN AUSTRALIA

EUROPE GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO CHINESE RED KIWIFRUIT

trade South 2007 Special Inside

European market gives green light to red kiwifruit

Chinese exporters are already finding buyers for the red kiwifruit Hongyang in mainstream European markets, increasing the likelihood of major investments in similar varieties



Sun Rising is one company that has managed to secure supply contracts for red kiwifruit with a number of European customers

AS the flow of fresh produce traffic from China to the EU continues to increase, the prospect of a large-scale commercial campaign for red kiwifruit being given the green light is becoming ever more likely. The successful introduction of new yellow-gold varieties on a mass scale has already dispelled any remaining ideas the marketers might have had that people will buy any kind of kiwifruit so long as it is green. A small but significant number of companies have taken that amber signal to mean the market is open to change, particularly in countries where consumers are willing to pay a premium for something that is special, exclusive and by no means available to all. The kiwifruit category is due another burst of innovation and, for many, this is taken as red.

No-one should be in any doubt that China is playing a major role in the development of new kiwifruit varieties, including red ones. While it

currently lacks the expertise in post-harvest handling, marketing or research and development necessary to push forward innovation in the sector itself, huge interest in developing production of traditional and new varieties from outside the country is turning the country into a hotbed of kiwifruit breeding material and a testing ground for new strains of the fruit, some of which in theory could eventually end up on European supermarket shelves alongside the green and gold varieties that are already familiar to consumers.

One exporter already making headway in the European market with a red-fleshed variety is Daniel Chan, whose Hong Kong-based company Sun Rising Development (Agriculture) Limited began sending small volumes of the Hongyang variety to clients in Europe under its Sun Red brand towards the end of 2005. Although the variety has a hairless, green skin, at the centre of its yellow-green flesh are

deep, red locules, making it noticeably different in appearance. The fruit reportedly contains more sugar and less acid than Hayward, as well as higher levels of vitamin C.

This year, Sun Rising has increased shipments of Hongyang to the EU and is now supplying Tesco, Asda, Morrisons and Marks & Spencer in the UK, as well as Netherlands-based import firm Trofi, which is distributing small volumes to markets including the Netherlands, Germany and Spain. Although the volumes remain fairly limited, Mr Chan sees great potential for growth over the next few years. "I think this year is looking very promising for red kiwifruit sales in Europe, particularly in the UK where people are willing to spend money on new products, and we have had interest from all the major supermarkets."

Another Chinese exporter, Chengdu-based Sichuan Kangxin International, is set to export around