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## Summerkiwi, the early kiwi with great flavour

*According to Giampaolo Dal Pane from Summerfruit, Summerkiwi will be without competition reaching the market at a time when there is no other quality kiwi available.*



**S**ummerkiwi is a new kiwi variety created in Faenza, Italy after more than 20 years of research and 18,000 crosses. This is a fruit which is extremely early, maturing 40-45 days earlier than traditional varieties, and which has a very sweet taste and lasts longer after harvest. Giampaolo Dal Pane believes that Summerkiwi will come to replace the early Hayward variety which gets to market without having reached its optimum level of ripeness. "Our product, however, offers very high quality in terms of organoleptic characteristics and flavour. Summerkiwi will hit the market at a time of year when there is only kiwi from the Southern hemisphere available which has been refrigerated for five months".

According to Dal Pane, the quality of Summerkiwi, together with the fact that it is an early variety, means that it will have practically no competition in the market. "Once consumers get used to this variety they will no longer want the traditional one. In Summerfruit we believe in brands, personalising all our kiwis with a label. As far as we are concerned, being recognised by the end consumer is absolutely essential".

Sales of this new variety will be done via Summerfruit, an association of companies located in the main kiwi producing countries which acquired the rights to Summerkiwi in 1999. "Summerfruit works in a similar way to the apple clubs which have sprung up so much in recent years. We have various sales offices belonging to our associated

companies. Currently there are five French companies, three Italian, seven Chilean and two Argentinean".

Plantations of Summerkiwi in the Southern hemisphere are still fairly new. "We set up our first plantations in March 2005 in Argentina and Chile and these were only round 50 hectares each so we still can't talk about any significant volume yet. Nonetheless, we have a programme in Chile which envisages the plantation of 500 Hectares in three years. In Italy we have planted around 320 hectares, 250 of which are in production. In France we have approximately 120-130 hectares. All this work has been carried out in just four years".

Summerkiwi's market is focused for the time being on Europe. "This year we have sold 1,800 tonnes. Forecasts for next year are for around 3,200. We are growing steadily on average by about 33% annually. In 2005 we started with overseas exports and we were able to prove that the product was strong enough due to its slow ripening. This fact is crucial to be able to make marketing plans for the coming years".