

Harvest of Southern Hemisphere's First Pink Lady Apples Kicks off

Detail Introduction :

The color on the new crop of Pink Lady apples in the eastern Free State, whose harvest started today, looking very good with a comfortable 50%+ of color coverage and very high pack-outs expected, says Punt, the CEO of Maluti Fruit Packers in Bethlehem, in the east of South Africa.

"Our primary work in the Eastern Free State is to provide excitement in the Southern Hemisphere apple market, because we're the first in the hemisphere with Royal Gala and with Pink Lady, ahead of New Zealand and Chile," he remarks.



Maluti Fruit packs mainly for the UK and for European clients, their fruit is exported by Cape Five Exporters, and they capitalize on the early opportunities for South African apples in those markets.

Hein says that the strong demand for Cripps Pink apples from Zambia over the past few years is an encouraging development. The apples are principally sold loose at the Soweto fresh market outside Lusaka.

"I would like to thank our clients for supporting the Eastern Free State growers and also announce that the Pink Lady volumes will be coming through," he says.

The size is a bit bigger than last year, peaking at count 135, which is, he notes, a size that fits well into street retail programs as well as into the Zambian Cripps Pink category.

He observes that color on the area's Pink Lady had been problematic over the past years, due to over weather and delayed cold.

This weeknight and morning temperatures in the eastern Free State have dipped below 10°C, with a concomitant significant improvement in color.

Producers have gone to a lot of trouble to enhance the coloring in their orchards, Hein says. Leaves and the fruit were stripped ten days to a week prior to the harvest which improves the light distribution in and the development of color on the fruit.