

Kiwi chips: an example of a circular economy in Ita

Detail Introduction :

"Four years ago, we started producing yellow and red kiwis in the Crati valley, in the province of Cosenza (Calabria), on about 110 hectares. The orchard is part of the Gingold consortium. Two years ago, the harvest was delivered almost entirely to the consortium when the trees came into production for the first time. Fruit that is not suitable for the fresh market due to its size is not discarded but transformed into chips following the rules of the circular economy," says Martina Aceto.

"The volumes destined for the processing industry vary yearly, depending on the weather conditions and cultivation. The new season has already started, and we anticipate larger quantities than in previous years."

"The project was born amid the pandemic. Several experiments have been carried out for over a year, arriving at the most suitable process. Ultimately, we opted for peeling kiwi, cutting them into slices, and drying them at low temperatures in ovens. Special, with the appropriate degree of humidity. The chips obtained do not contain added sugars or preservatives and, according to some analyses carried out by the University of Calabria, have a high vitamin C and potassium content. The Gingold consortium supplied the green kiwi, which we do not produce," continues Martina.

An important element of the dried kiwi project is the circular economy. "We start with the harvest in our orchards, and, once the product for the fresh market and the one to be used for drying have been selected, all the waste, such as the skin of the kiwis that we do not use, is destined for transformation into biogas. We have no waste material, and everything is disposed of in an environmentally friendly way."

Kiwi chips are sold in controlled atmosphere bags. "At the moment, the packaging is plastic with an airtight seal, but we are aiming for greater eco-sustainability for the future. Our initial idea was that the product would be visible in the packaging, and the only packaging that met our needs was this plastic bag, with a transparent area in the center".

The 20-gram bag, equivalent to three kiwis, is an ideal snack to take on the go. "But there are other sales formats in our online store: containers of 100, 200, and 500 grams; packs of 15 bags of 20 grams and 6 packs. Thanks to our online store, we are present throughout Europe", concludes Martina Aceto.