

Tango hits South African shelves

The long wait for the appearance of the new mandarin Tango in the country's supermarkets is over

The new mandarin Tango, for which plant breeders' rights were granted in South Africa last year, has made its first appearance on the supermarket shelves of the Shoprite Checkers Group.

The first major promotion for the branded variety has been rolled out across South Africa and is expected to become an annual feature on the South African citrus marketing programme.

"We are very much at the start," said Stéphanie Paoloni of Eurosemillas SA. "Our aim this season was to do a pilot test, to see how the South African market reacts to the trademark Tango Fruit."

She explained that after the initial few weeks Eurosemillas SA believed the retail promotion was already a success, although there will be some adjustments in future. "We will very likely close an agreement with Shoprite Checkers for the next seasons, supplying fruit all year long, including imports from the Northern Hemisphere."

The 'Tango Fruit' project is based on licensed growers of Tango variety having to comply with quality standards and certification processes, as well as to sign an agreement of use of trademark with Eurosemillas so as to be able to sell under the Tango Fruit trademark to the retailer.

"Although we have been working very hard on developing our trademark in the destination markets, we are very excited about this local project," Paoloni continued. "We are excited to be able to provide high quality fruits to South Africa and African countries, which are in our opinion strategic markets with high expectations."

She outlined that this season it was estimated that volumes of the Tango variety in the Southern Hemisphere will be in excess of 20,000 tonnes. "Our objective is that 10 per cent of this quantity could be marketed under 'Tango Fruit'."

Dr Johan van Deventer, chief executive of Freshmark, which is the fresh produce category manager for Shoprite Checkers, said that Tango was being supplied to its supermarkets all over South Africa. The company has backed the promotion with newspaper advertising.

This is the second South African retailer to have become specifically involved in the mandarin market. ClemenGold has been featuring strongly in Woolworths stores for some years, with popular and enterprising promotions.

AMC South Africa, which manages the Total Munoz business and investments in Southern Africa, earlier told Fruitnet that Tango was slightly earlier in production or ready to harvest than most of the current late mandarin varieties in South Africa.

It is also guaranteed to be seedless which will become the norm for most citrus varieties, but this is not the case with all late mandarin varieties. "Consumers want convenience, so easy-peeling varieties are in high demand," the group noted.

South African consumers are clearly taking to these two varieties and the introduction of Tango will take the mandarin category to new levels in the country.