

SmartFreshSM Quality System supports quality of traditional varieties

As the demand for locally grown, heritage apples is growing in the UK, AgroFresh, the marketer of SmartFresh has started to develop specific use recommendations to help growers deliver traditional English varieties with the quality parameters, supermarkets are looking for. “In 2007, our freshness protection system was, for example, used for about a quarter of the stored Egremont Russet crop with very good benefits,” explains Mark Tully, manager of Landseer, a firm that specializes in researching and supplying solutions within the horticultural sector and represents AgroFresh in the the UK and Ireland. “This variety is very sensitive, but SmartFresh has shown to contribute to a significant reduction of Bitter Pit, which provided our customers with a very good pack-out yield especially after Christmas. We expect that the number of SmartFresh applications on Egremont Russet to increase again this year.” Another niche variety, SmartFresh has already been successfully used on, is Sparten. According to Mark Tully, quality, firmness and shelf life were excellent: “After one week in the fruit bowl at ambient temperature, the SmartFresh Sparten had still a pressure of 6.65 kg whereas the control fruits were over a kg less.”

Promoting its new technology for local varieties has been part of AgroFresh’s sustainability program for a while. The success of SmartFresh on Bramleys, had started over 4 years ago, since its commercial introduction to the country. “Right from the start growers saw an opportunity to rely on SmartFresh to reduce the appearance of scald without running the risk of pesticide residues”, says Tully.

While excellent firmness maintenance, effective reduction of storage disorders and increased marketing flexibility have already been confirmed on many apple varieties, AgroFresh has started to assess its flagship product under a new angle: “The proven shelf life of SmartFresh apples can contribute to fruit waste reductions. A retail study in the Netherlands had already indicated valuable findings. We intend to further investigate this benefit in 2009”, explains Tully. “In addition, the company will start to look into possible energy savings through storage with SmartFresh. But that’s a long-term project.”