

Making Sense of New Apple Varieties, Trademarks and Clubs: Current Status

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Growers who attended the IFTA (International Fruit Tree Association) meetings in Germany in February 2009 were greeted with an overwhelming array of

“Many new apple varieties are being patented and trademarked and then being grown and marketed in a production and marketing club with access to grow the variety limited to club members. There are currently well over 30 club varieties, with the majority being grown outside of the US. The success of new club varieties will depend on both the quality of the new variety and on the marketing efforts of the club. Consumer reaction and demand will help dictate how many new apple varieties the market will bear.”

new varieties, new trademarks, branding and many new club, or managed varieties. In trying to find information on these new varieties, confusion is common as patent names are not the same as the trademark and some varieties are marketed under several different names depending on the marketer or region in which they are grown. Many varieties of apples are being

named or given selection numbers, then trademarked under another name and sometimes it is difficult to keep this straight. This article provides a bit of information on different trademark names, brand names that designate a company's product, not a specific variety, and some of the club varieties being promoted. This is not a complete listing; growers who would like additional information may look at the US patent website—patent numbers, which are included in most of the write-ups below. At www.uspto.gov a patent search by number will allow you to access the full description of a patented variety often providing interesting information not shared in nursery catalogs or research article

The number of plant patents for apple varieties has been steadily increasing with over 25 apple patents granted in the past year. Ironically, almost all of the US plant patents for apples over the last several years are of club varieties from Europe or sports of existing commercial varieties, with relatively few new offerings to the US industry.

In the US there are currently only a few club apple varieties and most are on a relatively small scale, but the number is increasing. Club varieties include ‘Ambrosia’ ‘Cameo’, ‘Jazz’, ‘Lady Alice’, ‘Sonya’, ‘Red Prince’, ‘Pink Lady’ and ‘Pacific Rose’). The majority

of these are grown by organizations in Washington State.

In New York State some apple growers are members of NBT that will grow ‘Minneiska (MN1914) and market it as ‘SweeTango’ (www.sweeTango.com).

There are also on-going discussions with the New York apple industry about some systems of controlled management of select new releases from the Cornell apple breeding program (reviewed in the New York Apple Association's Core Report (April 2009, Volume 16, Issue 10), but there will also continue to be general (non-exclusive) releases.

Organizations Developing, Growing and/or Promoting New Apples (this is only a partial listing due to the number of organizations involved in this area):

AIGN, the Association of International Group of Nurseries (www.aign.org) is best known for its marketing of ‘Pink Lady’ and for its membership in the Prevar group. Many different nurseries across the global are part of this network.

Better3Fruits a breeding company in Belgium has had a series of recent releases including ‘Greenstar’, ‘Kanzi’, ‘Tunda’, ‘Zari’ and ‘Zongo’ (www.better3fruit.com). This company has taken an interesting twist on names, starting with the use of ‘Kanzi’, a South African word meaning “hidden treasure.” Foreign languages offer many possibilities for names to use with fewer concerns about prior use or trademark eligibility. A company—GKE (Greenstar-Kanzi-Europe) was developed to promote Better3Fruit varieties ‘Greenstar and ‘Kanzi’ in Europe.

CIV (Consorzio Italiano Vivaisti), a Consortium of three enterprises in Ferrara, Italy. This consortium has released ‘Rubens’ (‘Civni’) and ‘Modi’ (Civg198) and has an improved sport of ‘Fuji’; ‘Toshiro Fuji’ (www.civ.it).

IFO, (International Fruit Obtention), is a private company located near Angers in France's Loire Valley that specializes in research and development of apple and pear varieties and rootstocks. IFO is a joint venture of three French nurseries—Valois, Mondial Fruit Selection, and Davodeau-Ligonniere.

INN, (International Nursery Network), (www.inn.org) is a group of nurseries in many different countries that test varieties for global commercialization.

Inova is a Dutch organization comprised of several different entities, which looks for new varieties to commercialize and is promoting ‘Rubens’ and ‘Wellant’ (www.inovafruit.nl).

Kiku, Ltd. A company formed in 2005 by the Braun family, with partners in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia and

Italy. They developed a marketing concept for Kiku-8, a well-colored 'Fuji' sport. In North America, Columbia Fruit Packers of Wenatchee, Washington have exclusive rights to grow and market Kiku. Acreage is not limited but fruit must meet quality standards to qualify for the Kiku brand name.

NBT, (Next Big Thing), is a 45-member grower cooperative in the US that was awarded exclusive rights to market MN 1914 apple ('Sweetango'). The overall strategy of the co-op is to develop and market new products, with an emphasis on quality.

Prevar™, the collaboration amongst NZ, Australia, and the Association of International Group of Nurseries (AIGN) stands for **Premium Variety** (www.prevar.co.nz). Prevar has released the apple variety 'Sweetie' as an open release and has recently sold exclusive rights to three of its selections (PremA 17, PremA 153 and PremA 197-detailed below).

Varicom (variety commercialization and communication) is a joint venture among Italian, French and German companies founded in 2004 to commercialize (nationally and internationally) interesting fruit varieties from Agriscop's breeding program in Switzerland (www.varicom.org).

Varieties in Some Type of Management System

'Ambrosia': Discovered and released in Canada and the US, but then exclusive rights in the US were granted to McDougall & Sons in WA who is in partnership with Columbia Marketing International (CMI). US production is limited to 500 acres. Stuart McDougall mentions interesting advantages to exclusive rights such as having the opportunity to limit color or not having to split the variety into too many grades.

'Ariane': A scab-resistant selection from the INRA program at Angers, France that is being marketed under the Naturianes brand. It is of complex pedigree. Additional information may be found at www.pomme-ariane.com/en/nature.php.

'Ariwa': A Swiss release that is a cross of 'Golden Delicious' by a Swiss selection (A849-5). This variety is scab and mildew resistant, requires two to three harvests and is of medium size, with firm flesh and a good sugar/acid ratio.

'Autento' ('Delcoros'): A selection from the Delbard Nursery in France, this variety is a hybrid of 'Delgollune' x 'Cox's Orange Pippin' that ripens three weeks before 'Elstar'. Fruits are sweet and firm. It is being targeted for consumers who like sweet flavor and a good aroma.

'Cameo' ('Caudle'): An open release, this variety was a chance seedling discovered in Washington State and once promoted by Dole Fruits. American Cameo (www.americancameo.com) is a group that formed to promote the variety. Two new more highly colored sports of 'Cameo' have been discovered, 'Dudek' was granted USPP#19,766 in 2008 and 'Cauflight' has a plant application filed.

'Chouquette' ('Dalinette'): A scab-resistant variety being promoted by Ligonniere nursery in France, but the production is only at 5,000 tons.

'Delblush': See 'Tentation.'

'Diwa': See 'Junami.'

'Enchanted' ('Western Dawn'): From Australia this 'Lady Williams' x 'Golden Delicious' hybrid is a sister to 'Pink Lady'. It is known for its non-browning flesh and attractive pink fruit. The cross was made in 1976 and the selection was first propagated in 1982. 'Western Dawn' received its US plant patent (#18, 640)

in March of 2008. This variety was made available exclusively to Perfection Fresh in Australia.

'Envy': A bicolor apple that was created by HortResearch and is being handled by ENZA. This hybrid of 'Royal Gala' x 'Braeburn' is very sweet apple (high Brix), high flavor and juice content and maintains its firmness in storage. This apple will be available year round, with dual hemisphere production. Currently there are field trials in New Zealand, the UK, France and the USA, and some trialing is also being done with organic cultivation in Italy. 'Envy' is not yet available for sale due to the limited current production, but the plan is to have similar volumes to Enza's other specialty club variety, Jazz.'

'Evelina': A sport of 'Pinova' being marketed in Europe.

'Eva': One of two trademarked brands ('Eva' and Mozart') representing apple varieties from Austria (www.eva-apples.com/eva/eng/index.php).

'Galmac': This as yet non-trademarked variety is an early apple that is a hybrid of 'Jerseymac' x 'Gala.' 'Galmac' is a product of the Swiss breeding program.

'Greenstar' ('Nicogreen'): Released by Better3Fruit in Belgium, this variety was patented in the US in 2003 (USPP#16,559). This green apple is a hybrid of 'Delbarestival' x 'Granny Smith'. A company-GKE (Greenstar-Kanzi-Europe) was developed to spread this variety in Europe. 'Greenstar' is said to have high Vitamin C and flesh that is resistant to browning.

'Jazz' ('Scifresh'): Developed in New Zealand, 'Scifresh' was granted USPP#13,888 in 2003. Jazz is a hybrid of 'Braeburn' x 'Royal Gala'. It is being grown in New Zealand and Washington State (marketed by Oppenheimer) to provide dual hemisphere production. New York growers do not have access to 'Jazz'. A sport of 'Jazz' has recently been patented.

'Juliet' (Co-op 43): This scab-resistant apple was named in the US in 2003 by the PRI (Purdue-Rutgers-Illinois cooperative) and patented in 200x. Exclusive rights in Europe assigned to the Escande nurseries, Saint-Vite, France (www.pepinieres-escande.com). It is marketed as an organic apple with a cartoon figure trademarked with the name and the opportunity to become a friend of 'Juliet' at www.pomme-juliet.com.

'Junami' ('Milwa' or 'Diwa'): USPP#19,615 granted to 'Milwa' in January of 2009. Tested as FAW 5878, this hybrid of a selection of 'Idared' x 'Maigold' crossed with 'Elstar' is from a breeding program in Switzerland and is marketed as 'Diwa' in that country and 'Junami' in Europe and internationally. 'Junami' is reported to have high quality and a long storage life. Thinning/crop regulation is an area being researched with this variety.

'Honeycrunch': 'Honeycrisp' is marketed in Europe as 'Honeycrunch' and the Pomanjou group in France controls exclusive rights in Europe. 'Honeycrunch' has the same production challenges as in the US: low pack-outs due to soft scald, bitter pit and poor coloration.

'Kanzi' ('Nicoter'): A release from the Belgium program Better3Fruit that has been patented in the US (USPP#17,201 in 2006). A hybrid of 'Gala' x 'Braeburn', 'Kanzi' is productive and has good consistency for size and shape. The name is South African for "hidden treasure." A company-GKE (Greenstar-Kanzi-Europe) was developed to help commercialize 'Kanzi' and 'Greenstar' in Europe. Storage disorders may include internal browning. VOG and VIP have been granted rights to market 'Kanzi' in Italy. From the www.kanziapple.com website: Currently there are 2.6 million trees planted throughout Europe and each season a further

800,000 are added. Forecasts from GKE are for growth to continue at a similar pace to the current one for several years to come. In Europe, there are currently 740 growers growing approx. 15 million kilos this season. Almost half of the crop is grown in the Netherlands, another 25% in Belgium and the rest in Germany, England and Italy.

'Kiku' 8 ('Brak' Fuji): A sport of 'Fuji' managed under strict quality standards by Kiku Ltd. and trademarked along with the slogan "fresh apple emotion." (www.kiku-apple.com, www.kiku-partner.com). 'Golden Parsi (S) da rosa' is a new clone of 'Golden Delicious' being tested for commercialization by Kiku.

'Lady Alice': Rainier™ offers this apple exclusively and in very limited quantities in the US. A chance seedling of unknown parentage, 'Lady Alice' derives its name from the mother of the person who discovered in Washington State.

'La Flamboyante': See 'Mairiac'.

'Marlene': A brand of apple, not a specific variety that is produced by the VOG, the largest group of Italian apple growers in the Sudtiro, representing 21 producer cooperators.

'Mairac' ('La Flamboyante): A hybrid of 'Gala' x 'Maigold' from Switzerland that was released in 2002 (www.mairac.ch). Researchers are examining crop regulation and this varieties sensitivity to cold and CO₂. 'Mairac' has rated very well in taste test in Europe.

'Milwa': See 'Junami'.

'Modi' ('Civg198): A product developed by CIV in Ferrara, Italy, 'Modi' is named for the artist Modigliani. This red apple is scab resistant and marketed under the slogan this apple is "green" (www.modiapple.com). 'Modi' is restricted in amount of cultivation with 500 tons now and 50,000 tons targeted. There is a Modi Europa group targeting commercialization. 'Modi' has been patented in the US (USPP#18,730). Fruits have high sugar and a good sugar/acid balance. 'Modi' is very tolerant to powdery mildew and to aphids in Europe.

'Mozart': One of two trademarked brands ('Eva' and 'Mozart') of Austrian apples (not a specific variety) that are supposed to denote premium quality.

'Opal': A hybrid of 'Golden Delicious x 'Topaz', this scab-resistant apple is also tolerant to mildew in Europe. Breeders in the Czech Republic have already patented this variety in the US (USPP#15,963 in 2005 as UEB 3264/2), with Varieties International in Oregon granted the US license. 'Opal' has generated a new management company based in the Czech Republic called Fruit-select, with partners including two French nurseries (D-Ligonniere and Star fruits) and collaborators in the Netherlands, the Czech republic and Austria.

'Pacific Rose': One in the Pacific series release by the New Zealand breeding program and marketed by ENZA. 'Pacific Rose' is grown in a dual hemisphere production with New Zealand and growers in Washington State. 'Pacific Rose' and 'Jazz' are marketed by Oppenheimer in North America. Washington State growers must pay both a per acre franchise fee and a set percentage of the gross for marketing.

'Piñata': (formerly 'Pinova', 'Corail', 'Sonata'): Exclusive in the US to Stemilt in Washington State and Dennis Courtier in MN. This variety was released in Germany by the Pilnitz-Dresden apple breeding program in 1986 and patented in US in 2000. Trees leased to growers at \$.75 per tree and there are annual production costs of 2.5% of gross receipts in addition to 8 to 10%. The 'Evelina' sport of 'Pinata'/'Pinova' is being marketed in Europe.

'Pink Lady' ('Cripps Pink): One of the first and best known of the club (managed) varieties. Many sports of 'Cripps Pink' are being patented.

PremA17 (T17): A Prevar selection that was granted an exclusive license with a consortium called T Seventeen Ltd. Company, representing nine NZ companies. All members will plant this variety and have market access but there will be a managed strategy for export. T17 is acid & sweet, juicy, crunchy, grower and consumer friendly and is an early maturing bi-color apple.

PremA153: A bright yellow apple with a hint of a pink blush, this selection has full flavor and a firm and crunchy texture. It is a hybrid of 'Royal Gala' x 'Braeburn' and has plant variety rights and will be released under a trademarked name. This Prevar selection has been licensed exclusively with Johnny Appleseed Holdings Limited (NZ Yummy brand). Small volumes of fruit are available in 2009.

PremA197: A Prevar selection again granted to a consortium called T 197.

'Red Prince': Exclusive to Riveridge Produce Marketing company (www.riverridge.com) in Michigan. Grown in Canada but marketed in the US. 'Red Prince' has the same parentage as 'Jonagold' and was discovered in Germany and tested there.

'Rubens' ('Civni): From the CIV program in Italy, this 'Gala' x 'Elstar' hybrid was from a 1988 cross. It is being trialed in numerous European countries, which may pose a problem with consistency of fruit in the market. The name comes from Latin for red, but its association with a famous Flemish painter is a plus in marketing. There is also an older 'Rubens' apple and an apple 'Rubin' that are both distinct from 'Rubens' ('Civni').

'Sonya' (Nevson): Otago International LLC, in Wenatchee Washington is the exclusive producer and marketer of 'Sonya' apples in North America. A production of 500,000 boxes is targeted in the US. Sonya apples are marketed and distributed by Sage Fruit Company, Rainier Fruit Company and L&M Companies of the Yakima Valley. All three companies offer Sonya apples to U.S. retailers. 'Sonya' is a cross of 'Royal Gala' x 'Delicious' and is very typey. 'Sonya' is also being grown in its country of origin, New Zealand, in Europe and in South America. It was developed by the Nevis Fruit Company. 'Sonya' has US plant patent #12,415 (in the name of 'Nevson') in 2002 and is also trademarked in the US and globally.

'Sweetango' (MN 1914, 'Minneiska): This hybrid of 'Honeycrisp' x 'Zestar' was granted US plant patent USPP#18,812 in 2008. A product of the University of Minnesota, MN 1914 is an exclusive of the NBT (Next Big Thing), a 45-member grower cooperative that includes members in the US and Canada. Information is available at www.sweetango.com.

'Sweetie' (Var-One or Prem1A cv): A release from Prevar that is non-exclusive, 'Sweetie' has similarity to 'Gala' and is being tested in several different locations in the world.

'Tentation' ('Delblush): A hybrid of 'Golden Delicious' x 'Grifer' ('Blushing Golden') developed by Delbard Nursery in France that is similar to 'Golden Delicious' in appearance but with more acid and more complex flavor. Sixteen New Zealand growers have exclusive rights in NZ with a goal of up to 250 acres (~250,000 boxes). In Europe low pack-outs and bruising have been issues.

'Tunda': From Better3Fruits this hybrid of 'Delbarestivale' x 'Liberty' is a high acid (.89 malic acid) variety.

'Wellant' (CPRO #47): This variety, a hybrid of a CPRO

selection x 'Elise', ripens two to three weeks after 'Elstar' and before 'Jonagold' in the Netherlands. This variety is well received in Europe due to its crisp attractive fruits with strong aroma. It has been reported that GA4/7 is being researched for russetting.

'Western Dawn': See 'Enchanted'.

'Zari': A hybrid of 'Elstar' x 'Delcorf' ('Delbarestivale') that was bred in Belgium (Better3Fruit). Ripens two weeks earlier than 'Gala'. Fruits are 75% orange-red on a yellow/green background. Trees are very vigorous and spreading. Granted US plant patent #19,473 in 2008. Rights to 'Zari' have been assigned to Carolus C. and N.V. Renee Nicolai for Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

'Zonga': Another release from Better3Fruits in Belgium, 'Zonga' is a hybrid of 'Alkmene' x 'Delbarestivale'.

Future of Club Varieties and Their Diversification

There are currently well over 30 club varieties, predominately being grown outside of the US when on a large scale. These varieties will need to offer consumers and growers a high quality, consistent product regardless of the area in which it is grown. The success of new varieties will depend on its distinctiveness, consistency of quality and the efforts of those growing, packing and marketing it. New varieties offer enhanced quality often coupled with unique attributes. While some argue that new club varieties will cannibalize shelf space of existing varieties, there are varieties on the market that need to be retired. Consumer reaction and demand will help dictate how many new apple varieties the market will bear.

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