

Classy Apple project' to reduce the quality gap between supply and demand of organic apples

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Abstract

LBI has started a project (2001-2003) to explore and reduce the bottlenecks and obstacles to fruit quality in the various market sectors by working with fruit growers, traders, extension services and research institutes together.

Keywords

Apple quality, organic, market chains, taste groups, SWOT-analyses, thinning, calcium uptake.

Up-scaling and quality gap

Fruit quality is becoming an important theme in organic fruit cultivation. Now that supermarkets have begun to dominate the market, different demands are being placed on fruit quality than before, when most sales took place through farmers markets, fruit 'boxes' or health food stores. Up-scaling is the only option to allow converted fruit growers to find the market they require, and supermarkets offer the greatest potential for increasing the size of the market. With organic cultivation methods, the high demands placed on the external quality of fruit are not always attainable. But the more expensive organic apple must in any case have an excellent internal quality.

The project 'Classy Apple'

LBI has started a project (2001–2003) to explore the bottlenecks and obstacles to fruit quality in the various market sectors by working with fruit growers, traders, extension services and research institutes together.

- to investigate to which extend these problems can be solved with the existing cultivation and storage expertise. The first year we start with: picking time prediction, thinning, calcium uptake and logistics.
- to stimulate the communication about which quality in the different market chains. The first year we started with making a SWOT-analyses, to introduce 'taste groups' to cluster varieties in marketing (as is already done in Swiss by FIBL and now modified for NL and import varieties included), the roll of inland versus import apples and to explicate bio-dynamic quality.
- to monitor Elstar from many organic growers: size, colour, injuries, firmness, brix, acid, minerals, taste and storability are determined of all pickings.

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Classification apple varieties in taste groups for the Netherlands

for an easier communication with the consumer and the trader by coloured labels

Variety-type <i>clasification</i> <i>only for inter-</i> <i>mediate trader</i>	Properties taste, external	Variety <i>italics = import for NL</i> * = scabtolerant	Taste group colour+ text on label <i>classification</i> <i>for consumer</i>
VT-Golden	predominantly sweet yellow	<i>Golden Delicious</i> , Delblush, <i>GoldRush*</i> , Resista*	slightly sweet to sweet (yellow label)
VT-Jonagold	predominantly sweet red	Jonagold, <i>Gala</i> , Pinova, <i>Fuji</i> , <i>Pink Lady</i> , <i>Pacific Rose</i> , <i>Rubinola*</i>	
VT-Idared (minor role in NL)	slightly sweet-sour	Idared, Jonathan, <i>Red</i> <i>Delicious</i> , Glostar, <i>Florina*</i> , Rajka*	
VT-Elstar	strongly sweet-sour blushed	Elstar, Cox's O.P., Al- kmene, Santana* (Brix ≥12), Topaz*, Discovery, <i>Braeburn</i> , <i>Ecolette*</i>	strongly sweet-sour (red label)
VT-Delcorf	fresh sour, crispy (typically for early ripened apple)	Delcorf, Summerred, James Grieve, Lombarts Calville, <i>Granny Smith</i> , <i>HoneyCrisp</i>	
VT-Boskoop	predominantly sour	Boskoop, Santana* (Brix≤11)	slightly sour to sour (green label)
Joke Bloksma, Franco Weibel, Henk Kemp, Biofruit-growers and Wim Jansen, version 13 Juli 2001			