

Retail Center Berlin:  
Both a meeting place and a  
research hub



“Knox™ brings many benefits  
to consumers and the entire  
fresh produce chain”



Small-cavity cucumber  
holds new potential  
for prepared salads



# Chainmail

Rijk Zwaan Magazine for chain partners | June 2017



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# Chainmail



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### “Successful introduction in the overfull tomato category”

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### Fans of the sweet pointed pepper

## “Japanese consumers like the sweet taste of Sweet Palermo”

The core business of Dutch company New Green Overseas is exporting unusual vegetables to far-off lands, and Sweet Palermo® is a perfect fit with these activities. Japanese consumers are particularly big fans of this aromatic, sweet pointed pepper ... ➔

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## Even more focus on retail partnerships

Chain management is evolving all the time. When Rijk Zwaan launched the ‘Integrale Keten Zorg’ (Integral Care for the Chain/IKZ) initiative around 25 years ago, it marked the first step as a vegetable breeding company to encourage closer collaboration between growers and retailers. Over the years, our team of chain managers has expanded considerably and now comprises more than 25 colleagues. They bring together partners worldwide to get the most suitable fresh produce onto supermarket shelves. In my new role as Manager Chain & Retail, I am keen to further professionalise our internal organisation and the service portfolio to foster even more intensive partnerships with retailers across the globe.

Aided by research such as taste tests, shelf life studies and even tests of different product presentation concepts, we strive to gain insights into consumer buying behaviour. To take this a step further, we opened our Retail Center in Berlin on 3 April. In addition to offering opportunities to conduct market research and consumer studies, the Retail Center also facilitates the use of several advanced techniques such as eye-tracking glasses and cameras that monitor how shoppers move through the store. Besides that, we’re keen to intensify the dialogue between us and our partners, and in that context the Retail Center is an ideal meeting place for retailers and their suppliers. We can present new innovations and also inspire our partners with various packaging and in-store display concepts from around the world. We are already working on a number of projects to enable us to provide optimal, customer-specific advice on the fresh produce category which is even more appealing and hence ultimately even more profitable.

Therefore it is no wonder that the Retail Center is in the spotlight in this new-style edition of Chainmail, and you should definitely read the article on page 4. Besides that, we’re also looking back on Fruit Logistica, where we won the Innovation Award 2017 with Knox™, as well as highlighting many terrific projects worldwide. I hope you find this edition a very enjoyable and inspiring read!

**Jan Doldersum**  
 Manager Chain & Retail



## Retail Center in Berlin

# Both a meeting place and a research hub

**On 3 April 2017 Rijk Zwaan opened its Retail Center in Berlin – a unique meeting place for food retailers where they can gain inspiration and conduct consumer research. Rijk Zwaan's objective is to help retailers and other chain partners to get even more out of the fresh produce category.**

### Activities on offer at the Rijk Zwaan Retail Center Berlin

- + Shelf-life tests
- + Focus-group research with a moderator
- + In-depth interviews with consumers, experts or shoppers
- + Sensory research
- + Retail staff training
- + Love my Salad events
- + In-depth scans to create category growth
- + Shelf design
- + Test shopping with eye-tracking glasses

“Supermarkets are the biggest sales channel so we’re keen to intensify our collaboration and meet each other face to face,” comments Jan Doldersum, Manager Chain & Retail. The Retail Center provides both inspiration and research facilities. On request, we can conduct research into shelf life, product presentation, test shopping and consumer preferences. In turn, we can use retailers’ ideas and questions as input for our breeding activities.” The researchers utilise state-of-the-art technologies such as test shopping with eye-tracking glasses and sensory studies (see left-hand page).



“... intensify our collaboration and meet each other face to face.”

**Jan Doldersum,**  
**Manager Chain & Retail**

### Stimulating sales

To ensure that the Retail Center is interesting for retailers from all over the world, Rijk Zwaan presents various types of fresh produce displays: the refrigerated convenience product displays that are common in Dutch supermarkets, on-shelf presentation as seen in German discounters and the American system of open refrigeration. For extra inspiration, there is also a ‘vertical farm’ and a wall displaying packaging concepts. “The Retail Center gives supermarket chains insight into the very latest developments that can stimulate sales in the fruit and vegetable category,” says Jörg Werner, Manager Business Development at Rijk Zwaan, who initiated the project.

### Differentiating through fresh produce

The initial reactions from grocery chains have been positive. Jörg Werner: “Retailers are keen to achieve differentiation through their fresh category so they are interested in one-on-one partnerships, especially in terms of assortment planning and product presentation. Their marketing expertise combined with our product knowledge can boost sales in the whole category.” Not only retailers but also other chain partners are welcome to make an appointment to visit the Retail Center in the heart of Berlin. •

*Keen to know more?*

Go to [www.rijkszwaan.com/retailcenter](http://www.rijkszwaan.com/retailcenter)

“The Retail Center gives supermarket chains insight into the very latest developments that can stimulate sales in the fruit and vegetable category.”

**Jörg Werner,**  
**Manager Business Development**





## Australian market leader in salads values partnership with Rijk Zwaan



**For Australia-based Tripod Farmers Group, selecting the right varieties is an essential part of their business. According to Managing Director Frank Ruffo, Knox™ improves the product quality and meets customers' quality expectations. That is of great importance for Australia's leading salad production company, which supplies its fresh produce to supermarkets and wholesalers nationwide, 365 days a year.**

Tripod Farmers Group started as a small family-run business in 1989, with six hectares in Bacchus Marsh. The third-generation farmers have since expanded the company to over 1,350 hectares spread across Victoria. Tripod Farmers supplies a complete range of specially fresh salad leaf products to supermarkets across Australia as well as to export customers and domestic wholesale markets. Tripod Farmers produces, washes and packs lettuce leaves, either in bulk or in punnets or pillow bags under its own brands, such as Leafy Patch and Cos It's Yummy. Freshness is guaranteed – the products are harvested, packed and distributed to stores within a timely manner to guarantee freshness. The company takes the topic of quality extremely seriously, as underlined by the array of certificates attesting to the quality of its products and procedures.

### New generation of lettuce varieties

That's why the relationship with Rijk Zwaan is so important, explains Frank Ruffo: "We continually strive to offer high-quality fresh salad leaf products for our customers, which wouldn't be possible without our partnership with Rijk Zwaan." He is particularly positive about Knox, saying: "We are excited about

*Frank Ruffo (left) with his team and Rijk Zwaan crop coordinator Harry Turna (second from left).*

the lettuce varieties being developed with Knox. Good variety selection is an essential part of our business. The quality expectations of our customers increase daily. Knox enables us to satisfy those needs. This new generation of lettuce varieties is improving the product quality and enhancing the consumer experience of our products. That helps us to remain sustainable in the marketplace." •

### Innovation Partner Award 2017

During HortConnections 2017 held at Adelaide Convention Centre from 15-17 May 2017, Rijk Zwaan Australia showcased how Knox™ lettuce varieties can benefit all levels of the chain. It turned out to be an outstanding event, during which Rijk Zwaan won the Innovation Partner Award 2017.



## Brazilian vegetable processing company La Vita Alimentos:

# “Knox™ brings many benefits to consumers and the entire fresh produce chain”

In 2016, the Brazilian vegetable processing company La Vita Alimentos from Holambra trialled iceberg and romaine lettuce varieties containing the Knox™ trait, comparing them against standard varieties. The findings were clear-cut: even after 14 days, the Knox varieties showed hardly any signs of oxidation. Coordinator of Innovation Luciana Amaro Rodrigues is very enthusiastic about the results.



To bring quality, health and convenience to the table of every Brazilian consumer – that’s the aim of La Vita Alimentos, which has facilities in Holambra (São Paulo) and Andradás (Minas Gerais). The vegetable producing and processing company’s products include packed Salanova® and cherry tomatoes, bags of mixed lettuce leaves and fresh-cut pumpkin, kale, white cabbage, parsley and carrots. Among its customer base are grocery retailers such as Walmart and Pão de Açúcar as well as foodservice chains such as Pizza Hut and Subway.

### Strict quality standards

Quality is a top priority for La Vita Alimentos, above all through an approach based on efficiency and innovation. The whole process is subject to strict standards so that consumers are always assured of receiving the freshest and healthiest product possible. Not surprisingly, the company was immediately keen to run trials with Knox lettuce varieties. “We are always keen to contribute to the development of the vegetable segment, which is why we participated with Rijk Zwaan in this research project. Knox can bring many benefits, both to consumers and the whole chain,” comments Luciana Amaro Rodrigues.

### Evaluating lettuce after washing and cutting

She explains how the study was performed: “The usual shelf life for fresh-cut lettuce in Brazil is seven days. For this research project, we monitored the lettuce for twice as long as that, i.e. 14 days. The objective was to evaluate whether, after sanitisation and slicing, leaves of iceberg and romaine lettuce with the Knox trait oxidise less quickly than other varieties. We stored the samples at an average temperature of 4°C.”

### No trace of oxidation

“After 14 days, the samples of romaine lettuce with Knox were significantly less wilted than the control group and showed only mild oxidation, while the control samples were quite oxidised and unfit for consumption. The difference was even greater in the case of iceberg lettuce: with a 14-day shelf life, the samples with Knox did not show any sign of oxidation, whereas the control samples were quite discoloured and wilted.”

### Higher quality

Luciana Amaro Rodrigues is enthusiastic about the results of the study. “We’re very excited because, in addition to other process improvements, these Knox varieties can lead to improved quality in Brazil and a longer shelf life for our products. That will help us to reach European and US standards.” •





At the Fruit Logistica event, last February in Berlin, a public vote among the 70,000 visitors resulted in Knox™ being crowned the winner of the Innovation Award 2017. “This prize is the icing on the cake following more than ten years of intensive breeding work. We’re grateful for the trust our chain partners have placed in us,” says Bauke van Lenteren, Marketing Specialist Leafies at Rijk Zwaan.

## Recognition for breeding work: Knox™ wins Fruit

Knox is a natural trait that significantly delays pinking in fresh-cut lettuce. The quest to find the trait involved many years of hard work, explains breeder Johan Schut: “We have access to seeds from around ten thousand different lettuce varieties, and we had to screen them all one by one. When we finally discovered the trait, we celebrated with cream cakes for the whole team!” Then the crossing work could get underway, continues breeder Egbert Smits: “We’d found the trait in a butter-head lettuce. The challenge was then to cross it into other types of lettuce, from oakleaf to iceberg.”

### Game changer

At the end of 2015 around six lettuce varieties were launched containing the Knox trait. Rijk Zwaan’s chain partners were immediately interested. According to Bauke van Lenteren, the innovation also attracted a lot of attention from growers, processing companies and retailers at Fruit Logistica: “We’ve developed Knox in direct response to what processing companies wished for most.

Sales of fresh-cut and bagged lettuce had been growing strongly for years, but pinking was a problem. Knox substantially extends the shelf life.” Jan Doldersum, Manager Chain & Retail, adds: “The issue of reducing food waste is high on the agenda for retailers and processing companies around the world. They’ve told us that a fresh product with just one extra day of shelf life results in 25 percent less spoilage, and that’s why they are so enthusiastic about Knox. It’s a real game changer.”

### Further roll-out

Processing companies in the UK, Switzerland, Poland, Australia and the USA are already working with Knox lettuce varieties. For the rest of 2017 and 2018, the focus is on a further roll-out. In the meantime Rijk Zwaan will continue to develop new types until all the main lettuce varieties have the Knox trait, spurred on by the extra encouragement provided by the Innovation Award 2017. •



“We have access to seeds from around ten thousand different lettuce varieties, and we had to screen them all one by one.”

Johan Schut, Breeding Manager Lettuce





# Logistica Innovation Award 2017



## FRUIT LOGISTICA Innovation Awards 2017

- 2017 .....  
 2016 Genuine Coconut, World's Coconut Trading, Spain  
 2015 Aurora Seedless Papaya, Aviv Flowers, Israel  
 2014 BBQ Grill-Mix, eisberg Group, Switzerland  
 2013 City-Farming, Straay Food Group, Netherlands  
 2012 Angello Pepper, Syngenta, Netherlands  
 2011 Limeburst Fingerlimes, L... Fingerlimes, Australia  
 2010 ART – Arils Removal Tool, Support Ex...  
 2009 Sweet Green Pepper, Ena...  
 2008 Intense Tomato, Nunhem...  
 2007 Vitamini's Snacks, FresQ...  
 Salanova Lettuce, Rijk Zwaan

"We've developed Knox in direct response to what processing companies wished for most."

**Bauke van Lenteren,**  
Marketing Specialist Leafies



Puntoverde RZ

# “Growing opportunities for flavoursome specialty”



“...deserves a place in supermarkets.”

Crop Specialist  
John Buijsman

**Romanesque cauliflower or ‘Romanesco’ originates from Italy and is popular among healthy-food lovers and foodservice customers around the world. Rijk Zwaan is responding to this small yet expanding market with its summer and autumn variety called Puntoverde RZ. Crop Specialist John Buijsman is convinced that this unique variety deserves a place on supermarket shelves everywhere.**

“Before moving into a commercial role I used to be a breeder at Rijk Zwaan. I spent seven years working on the programme that ultimately resulted in Puntoverde RZ. Our biggest challenge was to extend the availability of Romanesco, because the existing varieties could only be grown in the autumn which meant it was a seasonal product. Puntoverde RZ is a unique variety because it can be produced from June to November in moderate climates. By extending the season, we’ve made this vegetable more interesting for supermarkets. Retailer Lidl regularly stocks it, for example.”

## Mathematical formula

“No one forgets seeing it thanks to its eye-catching appearance. Romanesco is a stunning product, with the shape of its spirals based on a mathematical formula - a true miracle of nature. It has a more distinct taste than cauliflower. Its flavour is slightly nutty and it has a crunchy texture. Consumers can use it in many different ways: in quiches, stir-fries or blanched in salads.”

## Easy to grow

“The variety is not only popular with consumers but also with growers. I regularly visit producers of Puntoverde RZ and they tell me that it’s very easy to grow. It has a strong vigour, is resistant to many moulds and is not susceptible to internal blackening. Hence, crop protection agents are hardly necessary. Over the past season, we’ve seen that the harvested product has an excellent quality.”

## Mathematics in nature

Did you know that Romanesco is a natural example of a fractal? A fractal is a geometrical figure that has a self-similar pattern – it replicates the original shape on an ever-smaller scale. Romanesco illustrates this beautifully. The head and the individual buds are all arranged in the same logarithmic spiral, so even the tiniest bud is a mini replica of the whole head. Mathematics has never been so fascinating!

## Global interest

“Thanks to all these positive experiences, the demand for the variety has risen strongly over the past few years. It’s attracting interest globally, not only from Europe but also from the USA and Canada. Luckily we have enough seeds available. At first we struggled to produce seeds for the variety, but this is getting better all the time so we can now promote this product more actively. I’m convinced that Puntoverde RZ not only deserves a place in foodservice but also on supermarket shelves.” •







## Versatile plum tomato wins over British consun

# Successful introduction in the overfull tomato category

**Products are already vying for space in the overfull tomato category in British supermarkets, yet the Papeletto RZ truss plum tomato sold under the brand name of Ruby Jewel has managed to secure a clear position for itself within grocery retail chain Sainsbury's over the past four years. This result is thanks to the hard work of Eric Wall Ltd, a nursery in Barnham, and Sales Manager Paul Faulkner is now working on the next step: tempting more young people to buy it.**

"The very best British-grown truss tomatoes – that's what our family-owned company offers. We produce five varieties on a total of 11.5 hectares. Four years ago we were looking for a suitable upgrade to the standard plum tomato – and we found it at the Rijk Zwaan trial house. We were immediately keen to take this good all-rounder forward. Our customer Sainsbury's was also open to the idea."



### Great-tasting and viable tomato

"We started out selling it locally at first, and sales have gradually extended over the past four years. We now supply all the Sainsbury's depots in the UK. We receive lots of positive feedback from consumers. They love the taste of Ruby Jewel."



Besides that, it's a very viable tomato because it works well in both hot and cold dishes. It's a typical plum in terms of its shape and thick texture, and it's an average size at 50 grams. It's a fantastic product, including from a grower's perspective. Papeletto produces a nice, profitable crop."

### Simple recipes

"We're keen to further build on our success. Last season Sainsbury's promoted Ruby Jewel through in-store posters and on Twitter. Over the coming season we'll be trying to attract more young people to our product. Through online media and simple recipes we want to give them an idea of how they can use this tomato in their cooking."

### Impressed

"Rijk Zwaan are going to support us in these promotional activities. During a marketing meeting with them at our company they were impressed by what we had done and really pleased with the crop and our sales results. Everyone knows how difficult it is to establish a genuinely new product in a mature market, one that really holds its own – but with Ruby Jewel we've done just that. Hopefully we'll have the opportunity to develop more products with Rijk Zwaan's varieties in the future to reproduce this success." •

**Papeletto RZ is produced for Sainsbury's by Eric Wall Ltd, a nursery in Barnham. How have customers reacted?**

“

**Donald:**

"Surprise, surprise, a tomato with a fabulous flavour. You have hit a winner there."

“

**Ray:**

"Over the bank holiday I stayed in Paignton and purchased Ruby Jewel tomatoes. With regret I am unable to locate any in my area. Please are there any places I can purchase any?"

“

**Lynne:**

"I recently purchased some Ruby Jewel tomatoes apparently grown by you, from a farm shop in Dorset. They were absolutely fantastic, the best tomatoes I have ever had!!!"

“

**Rowena:**

"I am a great fan of the above tomatoes. I wondered if it was possible to buy a few seeds so I could maybe grow one or two plants myself, or if they are only available commercially?"

“

**Corrinne:**

"AMAZING TOMATOES!!! I just purchased a 330g pack of these beautiful tomatoes from my local Sainsbury's and wow they were delicious!"

Collaboration, partnerships and chain management are all popular media topics, with wide coverage of visits to new markets and participation in events.

Quick Clicks provides an overview of important or unusual happenings that have attracted media attention.

# Quick



## Retail Center Rijk Zwaan opened

Last Monday, breeding station Rijk Zwaan became the first Retail Center in the world. "Germany is one of the largest sales markets in Europe, and that's why Berlin became the city to have the first Retail Center in the world," according to Jan Doldersum from Rijk Zwaan.

> [Freshplaza.com](https://www.freshplaza.com)



## Berlin research centre to track shoppers' eyes

Rijk Zwaan's new 'retail experience' centre will be used to monitor shoppers' behaviour with eye-tracking glasses.

> [Fruitnet.com](https://www.fruitnet.com)



## Rootstocks help growers

Rijk Zwaan @RijkZwaan | 24 March "Our #rootstock varieties help growers to maximize their yield and to increase fruit quality #grafting #bestofbothworlds"

> [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/RijkZwaan)



## First visitors Trial Center Tomato, The Netherlands

Jan Doldersum @Jan\_Doldersum | 31 March: "First visitors of this year in the @RijkZwaan Demo Center #Globus supermarket Germany @JochemWolthuis @Valstar\_Holland"

> [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/RijkZwaan)

“

"We are continually expanding our product range for processors by adding more vegetable types."

Michael Sempf on

> [rijkwaaan.com/solutions/industry](https://rijkwaaan.com/solutions/industry)



## Rijk Zwaan at HortiAsia, Bangkok, Thailand

Jean-Marie Rozec @rozec\_jm | 16 March "Day 2 @HortiASIA! Still busy @RijkZwaan booth distributing #melon testing! @RijkZwaan #tasty #healthy"

> [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/RijkZwaan)



## Best variety at carrot trials day UK

Dutch vegetable breeder rewarded for 'Fidra RZ' carrots at variety showcase event hosted by the British Carrot Growers Association. Rijk Zwaan won the prize for the best variety at a BCGA trials day in North Yorkshire to showcase the latest innovations in carrots.

> [Fruitnet.com](https://www.fruitnet.com)



## Life is Sweet!

Pointed peppers that stand out thanks to more #flavour, #versatility and @convenience @SweetPalermo Life is Sweet!

> [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/RijkZwaan)



## Sharing knowledge in Africa

Maarten Hermus @MaartenHermus | 9 March "@HollandGreentec & @RijkZwaan sharing knowledge in partnership last days. We are (literally) together on the #vegetable market in #Uganda!"

> [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/RijkZwaan)



# Clicks



## And the FLIA-winner is...

FRUIT LOGISTICA @FRUIT\_LOGISTICA | 10 February "And the FLIA-Winner is...? "Knox – Delayed Pinking in Fresh Cut" from the Dutch firm Rijk Zwaan @RijkZwaan @KnoxtmLettuce"

[➤ Fruit Logistica](#)



## Bejo and Rijk Zwaan announce licencing deal

Bejo and Rijk Zwaan have signed an agreement for the exchange of non-exclusive licences for patented traits in vegetables. This exchange will enable the two vegetable breeding companies to strengthen their innovative capacities and introduce improved varieties more quickly.

[➤ Freshplaza.com](#)



## High potential for trade relationships in Asian retail

Strong local economic growth is fueling the activities of Rijk Zwaan in Southeast Asia. "As a result of the increase in wealth, big retail chains are gaining a foothold and are looking for direct suppliers of high quality, special products", said Ahmet Tunali, Area Manager at Rijk Zwaan.

[➤ Freshplaza.com](#)



## Rijk Zwaan outlines pepper importance

"In the blocky pepper market, we are always looking for better-performing varieties, more profitability on performance for the grower, but at the same time creating, keeping or improving on value for the whole chain. Every year we try to introduce new and better performing varieties in this main segment."

[➤ Eurofruit Magazine](#)

“

"A number of varieties that are perfectly aligned with the wants and needs of today's consumers."

Johan Vis on

[➤ rijkzwaan.com/solutions/sensational-snacks](#)



## Italy: Rijk Zwaan inaugurates second Trial Station

Rijk Zwaan Italia Managing Director, Alessandro Silvestrelli, explained that this is the second stage of a development plan in Italy, which is showing great potential. The first station was opened a year ago in Santa Croce Camerina. A third will be opened in Emilia-Romagna in 2018.

[➤ Freshplaza.com](#)



## Rijk Zwaan introduces first hybrid African eggplants

Rijk Zwaan has introduced its first hybrid varieties of the African eggplant. These have numerous advantages over varieties that are traditionally grown in Africa and will enable farmers to generate a better income for themselves.

[➤ Freshplaza.com](#)



## Markets are the driving force

When it comes to the tomato category, Dutch group Rijk Zwaan has all bases covered, catering to the needs of any individual market. "For all markets, we count on being part of the tomato supply chain, and we make efforts to optimise the chain as much as we can as a breeding company."

[➤ Eurofruit Magazine](#)



## 3rd Sweet Palermo Congress, Spain

Florent Rezeau @florentrezeau | 28 March "Good to see @SweetPalermo partners sharing experiences in Almería, Spain"

[Twitter.com](#)

**‘Where ecology meets economy’ is the motto at Eosta, the Netherlands’ leading distributor of organic fruit and vegetables.**

**The company, which is specialised in greenhouse crops and tropical fruit, is seeing a rise in demand everywhere.**

**“A growing number of consumers are making a conscious decision to buy organic,” says Michaël Wilde, Sustainability & Communications Manager at Eosta. The company continually surprises its critical customers with extremely tasty and unique products – such as the Pomodorini plum tomato, which growers know better as Wasino RZ.**

## The rise of the conscious consumer

# “Organic is booming”

“Organic products are not just a hype; they are experiencing steady growth. We’re seeing a rise in demand across the board. Millennials are the most important purchasers of organic products. They might not have the most spending power, but they are the most conscious consumers. Supermarkets have noticed that too and are increasingly expanding their organic offering. Even politicians have realised that it makes sense to stimulate the organic sector, because it creates less air pollution and soil pollution and contributes to achieving the Paris climate goals.”



### Transparent

“At Eosta we’ve made it our mission to make the world a better place to live. Sustainability starts with being transparent about where food comes from. Our trace & tell system called Nature & More enables consumers to learn about our thousand-plus growers on six continents. But we go a step further than that. In our video, The True Cost of Food, we reveal the hidden costs of traditional production methods. We’re advocates of fair pricing. And in our ‘Health Wonders’ campaign, which is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the pharmaceutical industry, we show that organic products can contribute to health.”

### Extremely tasty

“Consumers make a conscious decision to buy organic, either for a better world, for their own health or – even more importantly – for more flavour, which is what sets all organic products apart. Pomodorini, which is part of our Taste Wonders line, is a fantastic example of that. This slightly larger plum truss tomato – the Rijk Zwaan Wasino RZ variety – is extremely tasty. If you’re looking for good flavour, the first priority is to find the right variety. Next comes good soil, the right nutrients and driven growers. Organic Brothers – code number 300 in Nature & More – are real professionals.”

### Continually surprising

“Besides the growers, seed producers are also important partners for us. At Rijk Zwaan they understand that we have to keep surprising the consumers of organic products with varieties that not only taste terrific but also have an unusual shape or colour. Rijk Zwaan has a strong commitment to organic, which is why we have such excellent contact with the company. Whenever they have a new or unusual variety, they let us know. They help us to think about what will work in the market, and that’s very valuable for us.” •





# “Flavour, shape and stamina are important in an organic variety”

## Organic varieties

For the past three years, the Dutch production company Organic Brothers has been growing the Wasino RZ plum truss tomato, which is marketed by customer Eosta as Pomodorini. Aris van der Meer from Organic Brothers explains how the variety attracted their attention thanks to its outstanding flavour, but also its easy growth and attractive trusses. Today, this unique tomato is sold all over Europe.

“Together with my brothers Rochus and Dirk, I’ve been producing organic tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and aubergines on 48,000 m<sup>2</sup> since 2004. We work fully organically. We chose the Sirjansland location here in Zeeland because of the light clay soil, deep groundwater and absence of other horticultural companies. There’s no danger of chemical agents being blown onto our crops by the wind.”

“We truly believe in organic production, but it must also be profitable, which is why our company is tightly run. The biggest challenge is keeping diseases and pests in check. That calls for continuous scouting and the maximum use of natural enemies. We’re right on top of things.”

### Great stamina

“The Wasino RZ plum truss tomato first caught our eye back in 2010, during the Rijk Zwaan trials, because of its superior flavour, the slightly larger and firm fruits of 35 grams, its distinctive shape, attractive trusses and

consistent growth. In addition to that, for production in soil it is important that Wasino RZ has a lot of stamina and an extensive set of resistances against disease so that the plant is resilient. When we brought the variety to the attention of the people at Eosta they thought it was a great idea.”

### Retailers can set themselves apart

“We consult with Eosta to decide how much of each variety we should produce. Because the organic market is smaller than for traditionally produced crops, it’s important to organise the sales side of things well. This is our third year of growing Wasino RZ, which we supply from late March to mid-December - and with success. Customer feedback is very positive. Wasino RZ is sold as Pomodorini in many European countries: Sweden, Belgium, Germany, the UK. And it’s exclusive to just one retailer per country, so that they can set themselves apart.” •

“We truly believe in organic production, but it must also be profitable, which is why our company is tightly run.”

Aris van der Meer, Organic Brothers





# “Rijk Zwaan is a strong supporter of organic varieties”

**Grower Frank de Koning from the Dutch town of Brielle likes a challenge, which is why he has been focused on producing tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and aubergines organically since 2000. The right varieties are crucial for him. The plant must be strong and resilient, and the fruits must be tasty and of top-class quality. The Kylie RZ and Angela RZ aubergine varieties meet those criteria.**

“I used to work with traditional crop production methods but that didn’t give me enough job satisfaction. From a technical perspective, organic production is much more challenging. Rather than using chemicals and artificial fertiliser, we use compost, manure and natural enemies against pests. The open-field crops require substantial crop rotation, which is why we grow a wide diversity of fruiting vegetables in many different shapes and sizes – such as wild tomatoes, traditional cucumbers and striped aubergines. I have three facilities, amounting to 8.5 hectares in total. In fact, we’ve been a biodynamic farm for the past four years.”

## Strong, resilient plants

“It’s even more important for us to choose the right variety than it is for traditional growers. Flavour is always more important







than production, because organic consumers consciously opt for healthy and tasty food. And because they are also more likely to choose unusual shapes and colours, we have a varied product range. Besides that, we look for robust plants that are resilient to disease. Rijk Zwaan is one of the few seed producers that strongly supports organic varieties – thankfully, because we can't survive without them. At Rijk Zwaan, they take a problem-solving approach to flavour, resilience and resistances. Their varieties are well aligned with the demands of the market, which is continuing to show steady growth."

### Firmer flesh

"Around half of our varieties come from Rijk Zwaan, such as the Kylie RZ and Angela RZ aubergine varieties. Kylie is an aubergine with an excellent flavour and quality.

The strong green parts ensure that the aubergine remains fresh long after harvesting. It's an open crop which is very easy to work with and productive too. To

be honest it's all pros and no cons. Angela is a striped aubergine that has both a distinctive colour and a distinctive taste. It's a graffiti aubergine with slightly

firmer flesh which means that it absorbs less oil during cooking. This variety has already proven itself in the market."



### Customers first, varieties second

"Before we choose a variety, we always make sure we have a customer for it. We sell all our products through Nautilus, a Dutch cooperative of organic growers. We agree with both them and the end customer how much of each product we should grow. Our customer base is mostly made up of retailers in Germany, the UK and Scandinavia, but we also sell to health food shops, foodservice chains and recipe box companies. We pack everything ourselves in line with customer requirements, either loose or in small units – and we do that three, four or even five times a week. That's one of the biggest challenges for our company – keeping everything running smoothly to supply so many different products to all our customers week after week." •

## Love My Salad event foodbloggers in São Paulo

# “A gift to be together with the whole chain: seed producer, growers, chef and

**An inspiring occasion – that was how lifestyle bloggers, chef Leticia Massula and the growers involved all described the Love My Salad event, which was organised by Rijk Zwaan’s online platform Love my Salad in the Brazilian city of São Paulo in November 2016. The event was set up as a tasting session for bloggers, who between them have 1.2 million social media followers.**

Love My Salad has hundreds of thousands of followers all over the world, including in Brazil. The platform invited 50 food and lifestyle bloggers to the trendy Feed Restaurant to sample the chef’s tasty creations. Thijs Hulisz, Chain Specialist at Rijk Zwaan Brazil, comments: “We want all Brazilians to have access to fresh, high-quality and healthy food. These products help us to increase the variety on people’s plates. Bloggers can support

“For us it’s important to have contact with the end users of our product: chefs, consumers, restaurants and retailers.” They produce tomatoes under glass on 4.5 hectares close to São Paulo. One of their products is Silky Pink, the pink tomato with good taste. They are firm believers in this variety from Rijk Zwaan, with whom they have a close partnership and who gives them lots of support. “We were really happy that Rijk Zwaan invited us of this event. People reacted very positively to the concept: the products were presented first, followed by how they can be used. Chef Leticia did the presentation and preparation very well.”

### Inspiring

The Brazilian chef and TV personality Leticia Massula echoes their thoughts: “The event was very inspiring. It is a gift to be together with the chain in the same

### Sharing with followers

The 50 food and lifestyle bloggers who attended the event were positive too. They shared photos and updates about their experiences, primarily on Instagram – Brazil’s most important social medium (see right-hand page). Love My Salad will continue to maintain close contact with the bloggers after the event too. Tatiana Rodrigues de Oliveira from Rijk Zwaan Brazil explains: “Every three months for the next year, we will send them a mail and a box of surprising vegetables. We’re expecting to see lots of posts on #lovemysalad.”

### Stimulating vegetable consumption

Everything revolves around maintaining the engagement of salad lovers, according to Annelies Blaauwkamer, Marketing Specialist at Rijk Zwaan: “These events help us to build quality relationships



in spreading the message, and the event was also a way of letting them get to know the growers.” Those growers were Irmãos Amaral (peppers), Jorge Morikawa (lettuce), Fazenda Rio Bonito (cucumbers) and Yumi and Masota Kano (tomatoes). See the right-hand page for more details about their companies.

### Contact with chefs and consumers

The husband-and-wife Kano duo describe the event as a nice opportunity.

place: from seed producers and growers to chefs and salad lovers. It’s important to know exactly who is behind the food on your plate, especially in a metropolis like São Paulo. All the products were tasty, fresh and beautiful. As a chef, it’s a privilege to work with quality products, which have been produced with such care. Since the event, bloggers have sent me messages to tell me how it has changed the way they look at salads. It’s great to have played a part in that.”

with online influencers who have a big network. By creating an experience and showing new products we give them something unique to share with their audience, the consumers. That’s a win-win situation for all concerned and makes a direct contribution to our ambition: to stimulate worldwide vegetable consumption.” •





# salad lovers”

The online reach of the  
Love My Salad event in Brazil:

1.2

million people follow the invited bloggers

93

posts on Instagram with #lovemysalad

Casa & Comida  
magazine mentioned the event on Instagram

2,460

views of the Facebook photo album

1,300

views of the 360° video on YouTube

Introducing...  
the four innovative Brazilian horticultural companies



## Saladas Finas

Saladas Finas, based in Cotia, is owned by the Morikawa family. Jorge, Yolanda and Lucia work together on innovation, sustainability, food safety and, above all, consumer satisfaction. The company produces various types of vegetables, including Salanova® and romaine lettuce.



## Kano Tomates

Masato Kano, the son of Japanese immigrants, started his company producing flowers and plants in Piedade in 1999. In 2006 he added tomato production too. Safety, respect for the environment and high-quality products are Kano's top priorities and he is always on the look-out for new varieties and flavours. In Silky Pink, the company has found a stunning product with a unique taste.



## Irmãos Amaral

Irmãos Amaral is a family-owned company that was founded in 1995. Based in Igarapé, the high-tech firm's product range includes the Sweet Palermo® pepper. The company's mission is to add value and exceed the expectations of customers and employees alike. It is very committed to high-quality products and respects the environment as well as employee health, safety and well-being.



## Fazenda Rio Bonito

The company Fazenda Rio Bonito from Itatinga started out growing berries in 2007, but soon switched to greenhouse production of tomatoes. In partnership with Rijk Zwaan these activities were extended with Salanova® and, later, cherry tomatoes. The Snackpep snack cucumber is the most recent innovation, helping the company – which today has 18 greenhouses – to continue surprising consumers time after time.



# Crunchy Snack Lettuce set to win the hearts of Spanish consumers

**It looks great and tastes even better, and the name Crunchy Snack Lettuce says it all: a crispy, attractive lettuce leaf that can be filled with guacamole, cheese, fish or any other filling of your choice. Rijk Zwaan Iberica presented the concept to visitors to Fruit Attraction in Madrid in October 2016.**

“Various retailers expressed an interest and we’re close to testing it commercially.

If that goes well, we will start developing the Spanish market.”

**Alberto Cuadrado Salmeron,**  
Chain Manager at Rijk Zwaan Iberica

Chicarita RZ and 41-655 RZ – two crunchy lettuce types – have been specially selected for the Crunchy Snack Lettuce concept. In 2016 Spanish producers worked closely with Rijk Zwaan to trial both varieties, with overwhelmingly positive results. “In consultation with the growers we’re now developing promotional material and a special packaging concept for Crunchy Snack Lettuce. We have every confidence that this innovation will enable us to develop a new segment.” •





# New myCubies variety supports further market growth for snack cucumbers



**Rijk Zwaan and Spanish growers have been collaborating closely on the production and sale of myCubies for the past six years. This healthy vegetable snack is sold by European retailers, either under the myCubies brand name or as a private label product. The Quinton RZ white snack cucumber is now giving new impetus to the brand. Carmelo Salguero from the Andalusia-based Granada La Palma cooperative, which is one of the six partners, is closely involved in its market launch.**

“Our cooperative is increasingly specialising in natural snacks such as snack cucumbers and snack peppers in various colours. When we started with myCubies this was still a completely new market, and the production of the cucumbers was pretty challenging too. Thanks to the commitment of one of Europe’s major grocery chains, we’ve been able to develop the brand on a European scale.”

## Loyal customers

“Our snack cucumbers are sold through retailers in countries including Spain, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands, and we’re gaining new and loyal customers year after year.

Its size, at between 8 and 11 centimetres, and its fantastic flavour and texture make the cucumber an appealing healthy snack.”

## Quinton RZ white snack cucumber

“We’re now working together with Rijk Zwaan and the other partners to restyle the brand. I think that’s a good decision, especially now that the possibilities extend beyond just one colour and one type. Alongside Quarto RZ we’re introducing Quinton RZ, a white snack cucumber with a distinctive flavour and an excellent shelf life. We’re offering it in a mix as myCubies Fun. It’s still a little early to say whether it will be a success, but we hope so of course.”

## Unique

“I expect the snack market to continue to grow. Needless to say, other producers are also responding to this trend. But I firmly believe that myCubies is unique in the market because we guarantee a premium product. Thanks to our long-standing experience in producing and developing new varieties, we always supply our customers with the very best-quality products.” •

*Keen to know more?*

Take a look at [www.mycubies.com](http://www.mycubies.com)



# Healthy dark-green newcomer puts green beans back on the map

**For many people, green beans bring back happy childhood memories. With Faiza RZ and 17-300 RZ, Rijk Zwaan now offers a sweeter, dark-green alternative to this authentic vegetable. Moreover, these two varieties are much easier to prepare than traditional green beans.**

“Consumer taste tests have revealed that these varieties stand out thanks to their sweeter flavour and firm bite. The intense green colour makes them particularly eye-catching. These new varieties are also rich in nutrients – they contain more carotene and vitamin K. And because they are stringless, they are much easier to work with in the kitchen too. They can even

be microwaved,” says Alberto Cuadrado Salmeron, Chain Product Manager at Rijk Zwaan Iberica, summing up the consumer benefits.

In southern Europe, growers and retailers alike are interested in the new green beans because of their colour, high yield, opportunities for year-round production and long shelf life. “We’re initially focusing on the French and Spanish markets with these varieties, and then on Germany. This darker-green bean has all the right ingredients to become a success, even among the younger generation. It might even evolve from a traditional vegetable into a trendy one.” •



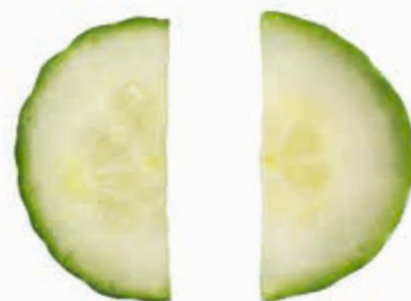
Faiza RZ fits into the Greentense concept.



Bakkavor extensively trials 24-250 RZ

Small-cavity  
cucumber  
holds

new potential  
for  
prepared salads



Cucumber is a highly popular salad ingredient but its use within fresh-cut salads is limited by its shelf life. For Bakkavor, a UK-based global provider of fresh prepared foods, a cucumber with a small seed cavity could open up new and exciting opportunities. The company is therefore extensively trialling 24-250 RZ.

Every day, millions of people all over the world enjoy a meal freshly prepared by Bakkavor. This market leader offers its customers an impressive range of choice; more than five thousand different products, including salads, sandwiches, ready meals, pizzas, dips and desserts, are sold through retailers such as M&S, Waitrose, Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury's or through foodservice chains like KFC, Pizza Hut and McDonalds. The company has 30 facilities in the UK alone with a

further 12 in China and the USA as well as a procurement office in Spain.

#### Maintaining quality

Alex Hamilton, Head of the Agronomical Development Department, explains the challenges that his team faces. "What do consumers expect of a salad? Well, it often starts with lettuce, tomato and cucumber, just like they would make at home. Unfortunately we're limited in how we can use cucumbers within our range due to

its lack of shelf life compared with other salad ingredients. We remove the seed cavity in order to maintain the quality through life but this still does not give us the consistency we require. A specialist cucumber designed for the rigours of the fresh-cut salads market with better quality through life would be a massive step forward. It would allow us to improve the quality of our existing product and also develop more salads and meals with cucumber in them."



## Trials with 24-250 RZ

Bakkavor is collaborating closely with Rijk Zwaan and other partners on this matter and the company has conducted various trials over the past three years. Hamilton: “Our results have indicated that we see better shelf life from cucumber varieties with a smaller seed cavity. A large number of varieties have been trialled, one of which is 24-250 RZ, from suppliers in both the Netherlands and Spain over the past 2 years. To date no one variety has stood out but 24-250 RZ has performed consistently well through the trials. Shelf-life analysis in our laboratory and at our factories has shown that, whilst the productivity of 24-250 RZ in the winter has been challenging, it has a number of very interesting traits which would indicate it has good potential to maintain product quality throughout its life. We are at the beginning of a journey and there is still a lot of work to be done but we are keen to work with RZ on developing 24-250 RZ.”



## Separate varieties for convenience

Bakkavor regards strong relationships with seed producers such as Rijk Zwaan as being very important. The two companies have been working together closely on lettuce for many years, such as on Babyleaf and Salanova® (see box). Hamilton: “Over the past 15 years, we have seen clear differentiation in lettuce

between varieties for retail on the one hand and ones for the convenience market on the other. We think that exactly that same differentiation will start in protected crops like peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers; we’re coming to a crossroads. The small-cavity cucumber is one example of that evolution. Maybe Rijk Zwaan will develop a large pepper without a seed cavity especially for the processing industry. We’re keen to collaborate with Rijk Zwaan to support that kind of specialisation. That will enable us to capitalise on market opportunities and to continue to surprise consumers with fresh, exciting ingredients.” •



**BAKKAVOR**



## Innovating in lettuce convenience together

**Bakkavor and Rijk Zwaan have a long-standing and intensive relationship based on developing new lettuce varieties for the convenience market, as illustrated by the close collaboration between Bakkavor employees and Rijk Zwaan breeders as well as growers to select new lettuce varieties. It's no coincidence that Bakkavor was one of the first to launch pre-packed Salanova® on the UK market. The prepared salad specialist was**

**also a pioneer in testing varieties with the Knox™ trait which delays pinking in fresh-cut lettuce. Whereas the normal procedure is to conduct field trials followed by factory tests, the process was accelerated for the Knox varieties resulting in another first: retailer Waitrose added Bakkavor's Caesar Salad with Knox lettuce to its product range at the beginning of this year.**

**Taste of Sweet Palermo® takes Indonesian consumers completely by surprise**

# “Sweet surprise”

**Is it a big spicy chili pepper? When the Sweet Palermo® product was launched in one of the supermarkets within Indonesia's Ranchmarket grocery chain, customers were hesitant to take a bite at first. When they did, the sweet flavour took them completely by surprise. The bell pepper is not yet well known in Indonesia but – in collaboration with Rijk Zwaan – retailer Ranchmarket and producer and distributor Pluit Cold Storage are gearing up to develop the market.**

Indonesian eating habits have changed over recent years. As the result of growing urbanisation and economic development, Indonesians are consuming fewer vegetables in favour of fast food and processed products. Convenience is a decisive factor. Pluit Cold Storage, a logistics service provider and owner of the high-tech horticultural company PT Cibadak Agri, is on a mission: to capitalise on the desire for convenience while putting vegetables back on the menu.

## Salads

Scott Martin, General Manager of Pluit Cold Storage, comments: “Salads only take a few minutes to prepare and can help to put the fun back into eating fresh vegetables. That's why the crops we produce include lettuce, tomatoes, basil, aubergines, courgettes and peppers, but also Sweet Palermo.

It's a premium product that is easy to cultivate and also has a very good yield.” Pluit Cold Storage produces, packages and distributes all its products under the Highland Vegetables name. Hotels and markets are important customers, but it primarily supplies to major retailers such as Ranchmarket.

## Top-quality vegetables

This grocery chain, which has 13 stores in Indonesia, was immediately open to the idea of running a pilot with Sweet Palermo. “The flavour, appearance and shelf life of Sweet Palermo are all very good,” comments Ali Wijaya, Head of Merchandise at Ranchmarket. This Indonesian supermarket chain, which is the country's only one to have HACCP 9000 certification, is focused on top-quality grocery products and especially on fresh food such as meat, fish and produce. “That's why we like working together with Rijk Zwaan. Their products are a good fit with a retailer like Ranchmarket.”

## Live demonstration by a chef

Because the pepper is an unfamiliar product for Indonesians, the three partners decided to support the launch of Sweet Palermo in late 2016 with a live in-store demonstration. Each company contributed to the demo by providing products, manpower or promotion materials.



A professional chef demonstrated how peppers can be used in cooking, and the [www.lovemysalad.com](http://www.lovemysalad.com) website was promoted to consumers as a source of recipes. The launch was a great success, as Ali Wijaya from Ranchmarket recalls: “Shoppers were astonished at the sweet flavour of Sweet Palermo. We're very happy about the sales figures during the launch.”

## Good partnership

Ranchmarket is equally enthusiastic about the collaboration with its partners Rijk Zwaan and Pluit Cold Storage. Wijaya: “For us, it's very important to be able to depend on a regular supply from the producer. Furthermore, we particularly value the fact that, as the seed company, Rijk Zwaan supports both the grower and us right through to in-store promotion, such as with product displays, a packaging concept and a special website. We hope that Sweet Palermo will become popular in the future. We're happy to work on future campaigns to inform consumers about this and any other new vegetables.” •





## Fans of the sweet pointed pepper

# “Japanese consumers like the sweet taste of Sweet Palermo”

**The core business of Dutch company New Green Overseas is exporting unusual vegetables to far-off lands, and Sweet Palermo® is a perfect fit with these activities. Japanese consumers are particularly big fans of this aromatic, sweet pointed pepper. Sales Manager Marianne van der Gragt sees opportunities to further stimulate consumption of Sweet Palermo through collaboration and promotion.**

“Our company ensures that small volumes of specialty products can be flown quickly and efficiently to countries like Malaysia, Taiwan, the USA and Japan. That can include all kinds of vegetables, such as radicchio, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, cresses or peppers. Bell peppers were introduced in Japan in the 1990s. They were very pioneering at the time, but they have now become known and loved.”

### Suiting Japanese tastes

“We’ve been exporting Sweet Palermo to Japan for two years now. We enjoyed being able to introduce something new. The sweet flavour really suits Japanese tastes. Consumers need a little time to get used to the shape, because they initially think it’s a big, spicy chilli pepper. But we already have a few customers for the red and yellow versions of the pointed pepper and the demand is increasing, slowly but surely. Sweet Palermo definitely has growth potential.”



Marianne  
van der Gragt

### Year-round supply

“Good collaboration is a big help. Rijk Zwaan put us in touch with NZ Gourmet, a New Zealand-based company that produces and exports various greenhouse crops, including Sweet Palermo. By working with them, we can supply our Japanese customers with Sweet Palermo all year round. NZ Gourmet takes care of supplying from December through April and we handle May through November.



We exchange information and refer new customers to one another. Year-round supply offers opportunities for stimulating consumption, and that will benefit everyone in the chain.”

### Japanese website

“Since April 2017 the [www.sweetpalermo.com](http://www.sweetpalermo.com) website has been available in Japanese, in addition to five other languages. Rijk Zwaan arranged that, and it’s great that they take such a proactive approach. They invest a lot of time in marketing and promotion, which really contributes to our company’s

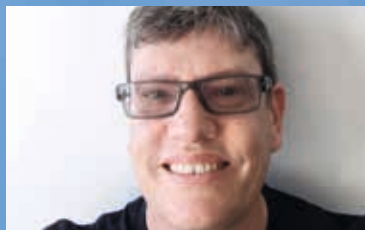
success. We highlight the website to our customers because it provides consumers with recipes and ideas for what to do with Sweet Palermo.”

### “Year-round supply is vital for us”

One of the customers of New Green Overseas is a Japanese wholesale company which specialises in importing fresh produce from over 15 countries and also handles domestic Japanese products. Manager Miayo explains why Japanese consumers opt for Sweet Palermo: “They like it simply because of the sweet taste.”

He is particularly pleased about the year-round availability. “That’s very important for us because it enables us to offer Sweet Palermo to Japanese consumers throughout the whole year. Therefore, the collaboration between New Green Overseas and New Zealand Gourmet is vital for us. The Japanese version of the website about Sweet Palermo can definitely also help us to further develop the market.” •





### Knox™ Meditation RZ

## “Offers even more advantages for the sandwich and burger sector”

Knox™ Meditation RZ is the perfect lettuce variety for the sandwich sector in the American market. This dark-green batavia lettuce has an attractively jagged edge and contains the Knox trait.

#### Characteristics

- The size of the Knox Meditation RZ leaves makes them ideal for use in sandwiches and hamburgers.
- Fresh-cut Meditation RZ lettuce has a longer shelf life thanks to Knox.



# From around



### Alamina RZ

## “Deep red colour and long shelf life”

In South America and Central Asia, Alamina RZ is performing very well. In Chile, the grower puts Alamina labels on the tomato, so quality controllers recognise the variety and are assured of the long shelf life of this tomato.

#### Characteristics

- Alamina RZ is a big intermediate tomato hybrid for spring short cultivation.
- Has a long shelf life and very good firmness.
- Alamina RZ has a deep shiny red colour.





- Headquarters
- Sales subsidiary
- Breeding station
- Production station
- Research and service station



Calabonita RZ, Calagreen RZ, Calawinter RZ

## “Introducing our new dark-green squash portfolio”

The three new varieties in our squash/courgette portfolio enable year-round crop production for the southern European market.

### Characteristics

- A high yield thanks to a high fruit load per plant.
- Strong plants and a long production season, resulting in a high yield.
- Long shelf life after harvesting, improving the attractiveness of products both in stores and in consumers' homes.



the world



Quirk RZ

## “Its striking colour gives it great promise”

In the rapidly evolving snack vegetable category, Quirk RZ is one of the newest varieties. Its unique colour makes it particularly eye-catching. This two-tone snack cucumber is a welcome addition to the product range.

### Characteristics

- Slightly smaller than other snack cucumbers and with a crunchy bite, Quirk RZ is perfect for blending with Querty RZ for example.
- In addition to being a healthy snack option, Quirk RZ is great for stir-frying too.
- Suitable for shigh-tech production and as a protected crop.





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