



Bells of joy ring over new SA table grape

New South African bred red seedless table grape launched at Fruit Logistica.

The South African breeding programme for table grapes received a welcome boost with a new red seedless variety revealed at Berlin's Fruit Logistica 2018 trade show on 7 February 2018.

Meet Joybells. Undoubtedly one of the most promising table grape varieties to emerge from South Africa.

Joybells was developed from an open-pollinated variety, bred by renowned SA breeder, Phyllis Burger of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Infruitec-Nietvoorbij, based in Stellenbosch. As the name suggests, 'Joybells' was inspired by the unique bell-shaped appearance of the fruit, as well as the remarkable taste and texture.

Those who have tasted the variety report 'sheer joy' with each characteristic explored. "Dark, vibrant red hues catch the eye, along with the distinctive bell shape of the grapes. Crunchy, firm flesh accompanies the intricate taste. A notably impressive balance of sugar and acidity."

Excellent reviews have been received from prominent global retailers, who already sold commercial shipments of Joybells as a premium variety over the past two South African table grape seasons. Best yet – their customers are coming back to buy more of this variety. In chorus, producers are taken with the fruit's yields, while distributors hanker after its superb storage ability.

Dr Leon von Mollendorff, General Manager of Culdevco, says information and plant material have been gradually released to the industry to ensure that a proper evaluation of the variety was done across the value chain, over a number of years. "The South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) and the ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij, with commercialisation facilitated by Culdevco, are working hand in hand to develop unique table grape cultivars to be made available to the South African industry at affordable prices and fees."

SATI's Willem Bestbier says that the unique benefits the South African table grape industry brings to the highly competitive international trade are profitability and well-adapted cultivars. "We firmly believe that our competitive edge in the market is technology-driven and there is nothing better than a home-made success story, this time in the form of an exciting new grape variety."

Over the past two seasons over 50 000 cartons (4,5 kg per carton) of Joybells have been sold across Europe and the UK, while producers and exporters are expanding sales of this exciting new variety to other world markets during the current 2017/18 season. According to statistics, close to 200 hectares of the variety have already been planted across South Africa. Dr Von Mollendorff says that from this year, plant material is adequately available to South African producers, thus expecting plantings to expand fairly quickly.

It is clear that the arrival of Joybells will inspire advertising people – 'Ring in the New', 'Pride and Joy', 'Bells and Whistles' and 'No Joyrides' are some of the slogans that bring life to this playful brand. Throughout the value chain it will be 'Jingle all the Way', as the characteristics and performance of the cultivar warrant a premium for the grower, exporter and retailer.

Joybells is commercialised and administered in South Africa by Culdevco – a major player in the international arena of deciduous fruit licensing. This prized variety is currently exported by 12 South African export companies, most of which are represented at Fruit Logistica, Berlin.

CULDEVCO (PTY) LIMITED

DR LEON VON MOLLENDORFF

Tel: +27 21 870 2900 / Fax: +27 21 870 2915 / Cell: +27 83 627 2284

Email: leon@culdevco.co.za / www.culdevco.co.za / 258 Main Street (PO Box 163), Paarl 7620, South Africa

ARC INFRUITEC-NIETVOORBIJ

DR BONGANI NDIMBA

Tel: +27 21 809 3100 / Fax: +27 21 809 3002 / Email: ndimbab@arc.agric.za / www.arc.agric.za

Nietvoorbij farm, Klappmuts Road (R44), Stellenbosch 7600, South Africa