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For Immediate Release

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Italian apple marketer KIKU announces Columbia Fruit Packers of Wenatchee Washington for its US partner for the marketing and production of the exotic KIKU apple. The agreement with KIKU Ltd. grants Columbia Fruit Packers, one of Washington State's largest shippers, the North American growing region as their protected territory for the packing and sales of KIKU branded apples.

"Columbia Fruit Packers will be licensed to use the KIKU brand with the same quality standards and unique blue box and logo as the European partners," explains general manager, Jürgen Braun of Giralan, in South Tyrol Italy.

The tree and marketing logo have all been trademarked and a marketing program has been developed that highlights KIKU branding and the consistency of quality in the KIKU brand.

Columbia Marketing International (CMI), one of the top marketing companies in the apple industry, recognized for their product quality, marketing strategy and experienced sales staff will be the exclusive sales agency for the US grown KIKU apple.

"Columbia Fruit Packers and CMI are enthusiastic about growing, packing and marketing the KIKU apple in the United States", said Mike Hambelton, Marketing Director for CMI. "The strong packer/grower/marketer relationship is key and the respect the CMI/Columbia Fruit partnership has throughout the industry will allow us to successfully market the KIKU to the U.S. marketplace", added Hambelton.

"At present, production of the KIKU apple is at different stages. Columbia Fruit Packers has planted our first KIKU trees in Othello and will be ramping up production as quickly as possible", explains Mike Wade, general manager of Columbia Fruit Packers. "There are a few trees already planted in the state and fruit should be available to start a KIKU program as early as 2008", added Wade.

KIKU has made a tremendous impact in the European market with its introduction. In 2004, the "KIKU-Pool Europe" was created with partners in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia and Italy (KIKU Ltd. itself). In August

2005, the biggest German co-op joined the Pool, the "Marktgemeinschaft Bodensee" from Lake Constance. The Pool works very closely together on packaging, promotional activities, new markets and maintaining consistent quality standards worldwide.

Columbia Fruit Packers and partners from Europe will join with partners forming in other growing regions around the world at the first KIKU-Apple World Meeting that takes place during the 5<sup>th</sup> Interpoma International Trade show in November 2006 in Bolzano-South Tyrol. Discussions will be held to further develop the high standards KIKU will hold in the marketplace.

#### KIKU BACKGROUND:

In 1990 Luis Braun, the South Tyrolean fruit grower, was traveling through Japan when he discovered a branch in a Fuji orchard with apples with an attractive coloring and a particularly pleasant taste, which led to KIKU. Jürgen and Thomas Braun are son's of Luis and have worked to develop the KIKU marketing concept.

The KIKU apple is very exotic, with a sweet taste, attractive ruby-red color, crunchy with firm flesh, and very juicy. KIKU apples stand out from the crowd: they look good and have a striped, ruby-red coloring over a large amount of the fruit. These features all have a positive effect on your senses as you enjoy a KIKU apple. The KIKU apple is great as snacks, salads and cooking.

[www.kiku-apple.com](http://www.kiku-apple.com)