

## Reinhold Messner keeps KIKU climbing

Mike Knowles | 18 November 2009

*Leading mountaineer features in KIKU-sponsored event as marketer scales new heights in terms of its global volumes*



Reinhold Messner, widely regarded as the greatest mountain climber of all time, was on hand earlier this month to help promote KIKU apples during the brand's sponsorship of the annual International Mountain Summit (IMS) held in Brixen, in Italy's South Tyrol region.

The renowned explorer took part in a Walk & Talk event during IMS, which attracted more than 10,000 visitors from Europe and the US over the course of five days.

The KIKU brand was also highly visible during competitions involving world champion ice climber Angelika Rainer, who features in the group's current advertising campaign, as well as during a schools programme and on the KIKU-apple juices on sale at the Trendy-Bar outlet on site during the festival.

Apple marketer KIKU is preparing to scale new heights after revealing that harvested volumes of the licensed Fuji variety have exceeded 10,000 tonnes for the first time this season.

In September, KIKU announced the official formation of KIKU SA, a joint venture involving five of South Africa's leading apple exporters – Capespan Exports, Colors Fruit, Dutoit Group, Fruitways and Tru-Cape Marketing - while a new partnership with export companies Applemax, Enza, DM Palmer and Pickmee has enabled it to begin developing new commercial opportunities for its proprietary apple trademark in New Zealand.

The group also recently welcomed Bonifructi, one of Slovakia's biggest fresh fruit and vegetable trading organisations, as the latest supplier to join KIKU-Pool Europe, the association of companies which market KIKU-branded apples.

Alongside another new member, Hungarian firm Fruchtpark, Bonifructi took part for the first time in the recent annual KIKU-Pool meeting, which was held at the start of the new European campaign.

Today, the pool comprises a total of 11 members from eight different countries, including: MaBo, SalemFrucht and OGM Oberkirch (Germany), OPST (Austria), Mirosan (Slovenia), Tobi Seeobst (Switzerland), KIKU Hellas (Greece) and Amadeus and trademark owner KIKU Ltd (Italy).

Selling to their eight respective domestic markets as well as to other countries in Europe and beyond, the sales season is now underway and, according to KIKU chief executive Jürgen Braun, eating quality will once again be "excellent" in 2009/10.

"For the first time, the total KIKU volume is above 10,000 tonnes," he confirmed. "Placed one apple beside another, that's enough to go from Moscow to Gibraltar. With increasing volumes, new markets are being opened, new customers are joining us and new promotional initiatives at point of sale are being invented."

Backing its international production and marketing campaigns, KIKU will continue to focus on special promotional activities that offer the brand a global reach.

Preparations are already underway to support the Ghanaian skier Kwame – known as the 'snow leopard' – at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, a project which will be rolled out in collaboration with US partner CMI.

The group is also patenting a new packaging format for KIKU apples in the US which no longer requires a film cover, Mr Braun revealed. "The aim is to be as green as possible in terms of materials and printing," he told Fruitnet.com.

CMI presented the new container during the recent PMA Fresh Summit exhibition and has reportedly gained a lot of interest already.

"We want to differentiate ourselves from all of our competitors on the market," he added. "This means offering a top product with a unique tasting experience, good ideas in promotions and communication, outstanding packaging and a fresh corporate design corporate identity with the KIKU brand, the apple logo and the Fresh Apple Emotion slogan."

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