

Argentina: INTA registers 4 new varieties of table grapes

The National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA) has registered four new varieties of table grapes, the seventh most exported fresh fruit in Argentina, which are produced in Mendoza and San Juan.

The four new grapes (two black, a red, and a pink variety, which the INTA made available to producers in the region of Cuyo) are the Sorpresa INTA, Serena INTA, Delicia INTA, and Fernandina INTA.

The institute is seeking to promote this crop in Mendoza and San Juan, which together account for 95% of the country's production of table grapes.

Table grapes are Argentina's seventh most exported fresh fruit, and the main destinations are Brazil, Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands.

In 2016 Argentina exported 13,000 tons of table grapes, and the provinces of San Juan and Mendoza account for 95% of the cultivated surface of table grapes for fresh consumption in the country.

To enhance the national varietal diversification, the INTA registered the four new varieties in the National Register of Cultivars of the National Seed Institute (INASE).

These four novel varieties were developed over 15 years by the INTAs from Junin, Rama Caida, Mendoza, and San Juan.

Silvia Ulanovsky, a specialist in genetic improvement of INTA Mendoza, highlighted how important it was for Argentina to have its own varieties: "The development of national varieties is a sign of technological sovereignty and represents a competitive advantage for Argentine producers because they won't pay royalties for the plants."

In this sense, "the development of local cultivars, which increase the diversity of varieties available to consumers, is an advantage for producers because these plants are adapted to the agro-climatic and management conditions of the regions where they will be grown," Ulanovsky said.

The INTA in the region of Cuyo has now made the new varieties, (which are the product of a very rigorous process in which more than 99% of the plants generated by crossovers were eliminated), available to producers.

These varieties, which are effectively seedless, meet quality requirements and grow to a minimum size of 18 mm.

The Fernandina INTA and Sorpresa INTA varieties produce black colored grapes, which is an innovation for Argentina because the country hasn't exported black varieties so far.

The Serena INTA variety is red, just like the Crimson variety, but it stands out because its production begins much earlier than the Crimson grape, which increases the seasonal availability of this color variety.

The Delicia INTA is pink and has a muscat flavor: "The great advantage over Moscatel Rosado, a variety that is widely available in the country, is that producers don't need to plant a pollinating variety," the report said.

The behavior of the harvested grapes, as well as the suitability for export, was evaluated at the Postharvest Laboratory of the Experimental Station Mendoza.

"The first results indicate that they can be kept in cold storage for a minimum period of 45 days, with an allowable percentage of shelling and dehydration rachis values," added Ulanovsky.

"This means they have good quality and export potential," she said. Nine companies in the region have already tested them in real conditions to determine their viability.

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