



Cosmic Crisp: the largest commercialization of an apple variety globally

New fruit varieties are continuously being developed to meet the ever-evolving needs of consumers. However, how does a new variety make its way into the market and become successful? Washington state-based Proprietary Variety Management (PVM) is a full-service commercialization company.

“We take tree fruit all the way through the commercialization process to marketing,” says Kathryn Grandy, Chief Marketing Officer with the company. “We are very focused on the end game, the consumer. We need to grow what they want. As a result, we start the commercialization process by working with consumer focus groups. This way, we learn what consumers think of a new variety. If the results are positive, we trademark and brand the variety and find growers for it who would like to be part of the project.”

PVM has been involved in the launch and marketing of several well-known apple varieties. “We’ve brought Pink Lady® to the US under the Pink Lady America label,” said Grandy. The variety is a registered trademark that is owned and managed by Pink Lady America in the U.S. and Mexico. In much of the rest of the world, the Brand is owned and managed by the company Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL).



Photo credit: Darren Zemanek.

Cosmic Crisp® WA 38: largest commercialization globally

A brand the company is probably most known for is Cosmic Crisp®. The variety is a cross of the Enterprise and Honeycrisp varieties and is owned by Washington State University. “The process of commercializing this variety was the largest of any tree fruit variety globally so far,” mentioned Grandy. Cosmic Crisp® was first planted commercially in 2017 and by 2023, 20 million trees are expected to be in the ground in the US alone. “This is unprecedented,” she added. In addition to the United States, Cosmic Crisp is also grown in Europe, New Zealand, Australia, Korea, South Africa, China, India, and Russia. “Within North America, Washington state has the exclusive growing rights for at least 10 years and an option to extend for the duration of the US Plant Patent which is about seven additional years.”

The first Cosmic Crisp® apples were shipped on December 1, 2019, but this calendar year will be the variety's first 12-month year. In the United States it has a brand awareness of 27 percent and is the 7th most popular apple, right behind Pink Lady®.



Cosmic Crisp apples. Photo credit: Proprietary Variety Management.

Other fruit varieties

Next year, PVM will start a partnership with a company in the Netherlands for the Magic Star® apple variety. The company is also working on a global rollout of the SnapDragon® and RubyFrost® varieties that were developed by Cornell University. However, in addition to apples, PVM also brings pears, cherries, and stone fruit to market. “We are continuously being presented with new opportunities,” said Grandy. A unique example is the bayberry. It is a wild berry that was developed by the University of Queensland and PVM is licensed to commercialize this variety in the US.



Sunrise Magic apple variety, commercialized by PVM. Photo credit: Mike Endsley.

Global databases

In recent years, PVM has developed Hertha™, one of the largest internet accessible databases in the world to facilitate tracking, sales, IP management, and evaluation of varieties. Sales tracking allows growers to track where fruit trees of a certain variety are planted. In addition, sales data can also be used for the tracking of royalties. All PVM's partners have access to the Hertha™ database.

Another database and developed by PVM inhouse is Idyia™. It's a proprietary commercialization oriented database that assists growers, packers and sales partners around the world manage their crops. Growers are able to see where trees are planted globally. In addition, sales of trees and products are recorded in Idyia™, and the database also provides marketing information of varieties, as well as protecting confidential and intellectual information.



Idyia database. Photo credit Ben Helgeson.



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