

# Timing Taste Times

## Nr 2

June 2010

## Italians are ready for Timing Taste

*On the 27th and 28th of April, Enza Zaden held its House Fair Sicily 2010 event. An international group of growers and traders descended upon this annual event which featured a visit to the tomato demo greenhouse, a Timing Taste symposium, and trips to see various professional and regional growers and packing houses.*



### Active export and marketing policy

The fact that Sicilian growers maintain an active export and marketing policy was once again evident during the interesting company visits and the interest shown by the 120 visitors to the Timing Taste symposium. The symposium treated subjects such as the developments on the Italian market, the trends that Enza Zaden has observed on the European market, and the semi-annual EU supermarket analysis that provides a good idea of what may be seen on European supermarket shelves.

### Timing Taste well-received

The responses to the Timing Taste concept were very positive. There appears to be an enormous drive for companies to use marketing to differentiate their products in the market. With a market share of 38% (4,000 hectares) of the total Italian tomato cultivation industry, Sicily is a major player in Europe.

### Most popular varieties

The tomato demo greenhouse had an unprecedented broad range of new and well-known Enza Zaden varieties available, representing all of the current tomato segments. Tasting and seeing the different varieties played a key role in this visit to the demo greenhouse. The varieties that really stood out both in terms of quality as well as taste were the Sunstream, Rosselino (vine mini-plum), Vespolino (vine mini-San Marzano), Bried (120-gram vine tomato) and Naram (rough uniform plum tomato).



Ron de Greeff, Managing Director at Langfruit, visited the House Fair Sicily 2010 and had the following to say: "In summary, I would say it was an interesting House Fair which, in only two days, provided visitors with an excellent impression of the Sicilian production and Enza Zaden's activities. There were also extremely promising varieties on display which offer many opportunities in terms of their taste and qualities."

## Colofon

Timing Taste is an inspiring edition of Enza zaden which will be published quarterly.

### Editors:

Chris Groot  
Annemieke Beemster  
Marloes van Klaveren

### Address:

Enza Zaden  
PO Box 7, 1600 AA Enkhuizen  
Phone: 0228 35 13 47  
Email: [marketing@enzazaden.nl](mailto:marketing@enzazaden.nl)

If you like to receive our newsletter please go to our website [www.timingtaste.com](http://www.timingtaste.com) and click on "subscribe to our newsletter".



# Enza Zaden joins the pink tomato trend

*A pink tomato instead of the well-known red variety. A completely unknown product in most markets, but one third of the world's population doesn't know anything else. The Chinese and Japanese market, for instance, where there is a high demand for this pink variety. This is an interesting development for Enza Zaden, particularly now that the gene that determines this colour has been identified.*

Early this year, Plant Research International, part of the Wageningen UR, announced that it had discovered the gene that is responsible for a pink colour in tomatoes. Although it has been known since 1925 that a mutation in the tomato genome is responsible for this colour, for many years the scientific world has been in the dark about what causes it. Up until now that is, ever since research led by Dr Arnaud Bovy has recently shown that this mutation is caused by a gene that blocks the production of flavonoids. Flavonoids are present in the skin of the fruit, and are thought to act as antioxidants, strengthening the immune system and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. The yellow in this substance is what gives tomatoes their normal red colour when combined with the red lycopene.

## Achieving the desired results, faster and more efficiently

It goes without saying that extensive knowledge of genetics is of vital importance for breeding companies such as Enza Zaden. This is precisely the reason that Enza Zaden's research team was so closely involved in Dr Bovy's research. What does this discovery actually mean for Enza Zaden? The Enza Zaden breeding stations in China are already putting



the identification of the gene to use on a large scale. "This knowledge combined with the molecular biology expertise we already have is helping us to develop good, innovative tomato varieties which possess the so-called 'pink traits'", Frits Herlaar, Crop Research Manager for tomatoes at Enza Zaden reports. "We are now able to breed for the desired traits faster and more efficiently."

Since the gene responsible for this trait has now been identified, the Molecular Marker technology now offers possibilities that were previously unheard of. Thanks to this technique, we can now determine whether or not the gene for the pink tomato is present in

young plants, a factor that can speed up the breeding process considerably. Additionally, it saves an incredible amount of space in the greenhouse since we know before the planting-out phase which hybrids have the desired gene needed to produce the pink tomato. In practice, it appears that some 75% of the initial hybrids are not suitable for further breeding since they lack the right gene. This means that we can remove these plants from the first tests at an early stage.

## The future of pink

The first two pink tomato varieties are already being screened in the Asian market. To be specific, the Chinese market, where pink has traditionally been the standard colour for tomatoes. There are also good opportunities for this colour variety in Japan, Korea, other Asian countries and perhaps even Eastern Europe as well. Enza Zaden, therefore, already started the first screenings. One could even say the future looks quite rosy for this product. "For the future, we are also considering the possibilities for even more varieties with 'pink traits', such as a pink cherry tomato," Frits Herlaar says. "This is one way we can add even more differentiation to our range."

# The Enza Zaden beef tomato: highly valued and full of promise

*The Timing Taste activities' soaring success on an international level has become all the more apparent over the past few months. The campaign was recently launched successfully in Italy, and on the 21st and 22nd of April, Enza Zaden was able to treat the most important growers in Spain with a comprehensive presentation of its promising package of beef tomato varieties, a segment with a market share of five million Euros in Spain alone.*

The interest in this open house was enormous judging from the turnout: over five hundred top breeders from the heart of the Spanish cultivation region, Almeria and Murcia, attended the event. After all, there was plenty for the visitors to see and experience, such as the extensive range of beef tomato varieties: from the well-known varieties Vernal, Velasco, Amaral and Carson, to several new promising varieties such as the E 27.34398 and E 27.34446.



What made this presentation of the varieties particularly appealing was the extra details Carlos Herreras Lopez, product manager at Enza Zaden Spain, shared on the Vernal, Velasco and Amaral types. Not only did he discuss the well-known positive qualities of these products, such as the attractive cultivation aspects and the high yield of the varieties, but in true keeping with the Timing Taste concept, the products' marketing aspects were also featured. How do they differentiate themselves in the market, and how can growers further improve their competitive position with these varieties?

# The snack tomato: a product for the future

*In 2007, a new product took the tomato shelves in supermarkets by storm: the sweet snack tomato. If packaged right, a brand can quickly catch a shopper's eye. Tasty-looking tomatoes, packaged in a plastic container similar in appearance to a cocktail shaker. Appropriately enough, this type of packaging is referred to as 'the shaker', and at the time, was an entirely new concept on the market. It was obviously a popular concept as well since we now see this packaging used with other products such as cucumber and sweet peppers.*



Now, three years later, Van Kester-Weijs's TomBon tomato is still a success, and this is not only due to the product's innovative packaging. "We are still positive about the product; if we weren't, we wouldn't continue to market it," Maurice Weijs of Van Kester-Weijs tells us. "The snack-tomato segment has experienced significant growth. Although this growth is stabilising, the snack tomato is definitely a product for the future. It is a convenient product that lends itself well to a variety of consumption opportunities: on the way to work, at lunch, in the car, and in the evening as a snack. Besides, I have not seen many children who don't like this tomato."

In other words, the company has a great deal of faith in the product. Van Kester-Weijs had already had the requisite experience in the taste segment. Established in 1998, the company started out cultivating cocktail tomatoes such as the Aranca and Ballerina varieties, also Enza Zaden varieties. "These varieties had good growth, taste and shape," Maurice says. In spite of this success, four years ago, the company made the switch to the new segment of snack tomatoes. These days, the company has three hectares of the Heartbreaker variety, and three of a new Enza Zaden snack tomato. So why make this switch? Their reasoning: "It is still the product of the future, and we believe in it. In the extensive taste test conducted by the weekly publication "Groente & Fruit" last year, we came in second with Heartbreaker, whereas the winning product is in a more expensive segment. And during our own consumer

testing which we carry out locally on a small scale to learn more about what consumers want, we found that our snack tomatoes are quite popular in the market."

## Innovative packaging

The market for the TomBon is fruit and vegetable speciality stores, and primarily the supermarkets of Northwest Europe: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and a small section of Scandinavia. This is also a market that, in general, does not tend to shift. It is a strong brand, certainly for retailers and traders. This is unusual, since for Van Kester-Weijs, brand development is not at the top of the list of priorities. "For us, a good relationship with our customers is more important than a strong brand. If you have that, the product will sell itself. We definitely examine the possibilities to develop a brand, but then it must be unique, a complete concept. If it's not a complete concept, then anything that can be copied will be 'stolen' by someone else, and they will be the one to profit from something you have worked hard to develop."

By 'complete', Maurice is referring to the innovative packaging he devised for his product: the shakers. At the time, it was unique, and an entirely different concept. "We really liked the packaging, and it was something totally different. This was a way for us to set our product apart on the shelf. An added bonus is that the shakers offer protection for the product, and make them easier for consumers to take with them. You can even set the shaker down next to you in the car." This type of packaging is now also seen used for snack-sized sweet peppers and cucumbers. "It's a bit of a pity that an idea like this can be copied so easily," the inventor of the concept says. In this case, the expression "every disadvantage has its advantage" also applies here. After all, it appears as though a real trend has begun when it comes to this type of packaging, and this way, one product can boost the sales of another. "It can be a fairly good way to stimulate sales," Maurice admits.

## Marketing on product shelves

What is Van Kester-Weijs's vision on 'vegetable-shelf' marketing? "There is definitely room for improvement, particularly when it comes to clear communication. The range of tomatoes in the stores is so large these days that shoppers no longer know which tomato is suitable for which purpose. Good flyers or the use of symbols to explain this could be a good way to solve this. As far as this goes, growers or grower associations should 'educate' the supermarkets." Enza Zaden could also play an important role in these efforts. Timing Taste is, after all, the platform that promotes collaboration throughout the entire chain in order to create a win-win situation for all of the parties. Maurice definitely agrees: "First of all, Enza Zaden can of course contribute with its varieties, but it can definitely also make a difference when it comes to marketing and communication. We have a common interest, and could grow well together, and complement one another. This is something we are not really doing yet."



# Vernal, the right product at the right time

Enza Zaden also helps growers by offering complete information on varieties and marketing. And of course it helps to launch the right product on the market at precisely the right time. With its traditional flavour, Vernal is just such a product! After all, it is no accident that this variety, suitable for non-heated cultivations, has a twenty percent market share. A very good reason to draw extra attention to this variety.

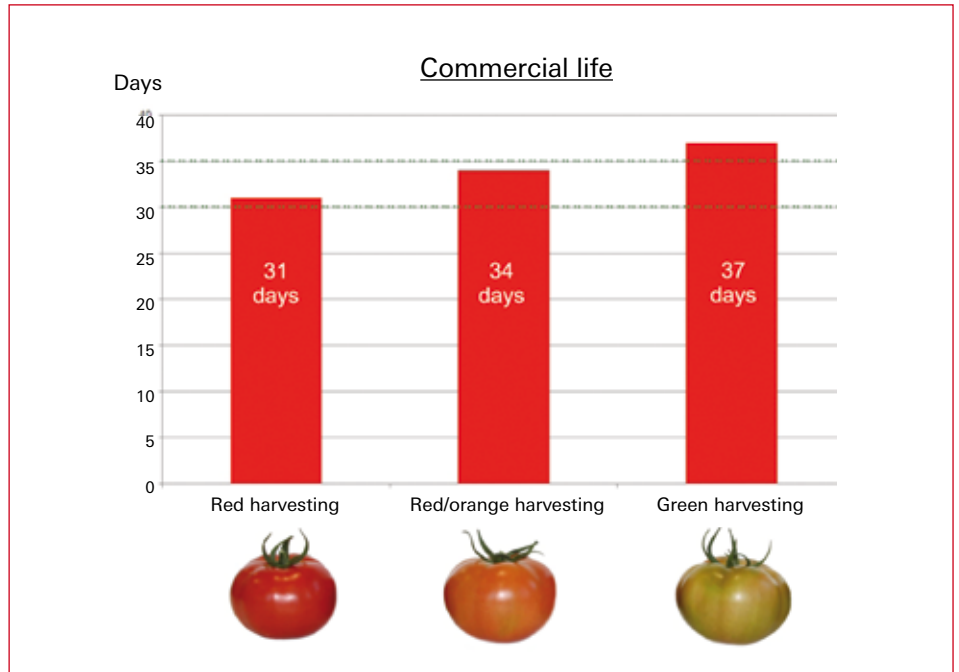
However, it is not only the traditional flavour that makes this variety so unique. Vernal is the only variety that produces eight trusses, yielding fruit which are suitable for markets demanding large beef tomatoes, as well as those which require smaller ones. This variety yields very firm fruit, and may be harvested from the pre-ripe to the ripe stages. Vernal is the first variety of this type of tomato which also generates a higher auction price than the other types in the top segment, such as the vine tomato.

## An asset for the entire chain

There are even more advantages; other parties in the chain also profit with Vernal. The retail and export trade for example, where this variety enjoys high demand thanks to its long average shelf life of 31 to 37 days, depending on the colour of the fruit when harvested (see

graph). This tomato is also praised by the export trade for its sales opportunities. These opportunities are not only present in the beef tomato segment, but also in the large, loose tomato segment. The tomato's typical Mediterranean appearance is very popular in various European markets.

And European consumers? The variety is also quite popular among this audience. The perfect balance between the Brix content and the pH is responsible for the popular, authentic tomato flavour. All in all, the attractive presentation of a traditional and healthy tomato really help the Vernal stand out.



## Overview of upcoming events:

### Asia Fruit Logistica / HongKong, China

8-10 September 2010

### Open days Germany / Dannstadt-Schauernheim

16 September 2010

### Open days Vitalis Voorst, Netherlands

28 September- 1 October 2010

### Housefair Spain / Almeria, Spain

16-18 November 2010



House Fair 2010



## Novelties

### Vespolino

Vespolino is a variety which really contributes something the range of tomato types: a distinguished shape, a warm attractive dark red fruit colour and outstanding fruit quality.



Fruits are a mix between an elongated plum shaped fruit and a mini 'San Marzano'-type. Trusses are well shaped, uniform and present well. And the taste? Very flavoursome, very well balanced sweet and sour mix, and the brix is extremely stable through the cultivation period. This variety can be grown in both Northern European and Southern European conditions.

Go to [www.timingtaste.com](http://www.timingtaste.com)  
and subscribe to our newsletter