

FRANCE

# China beckons for Oscar

Having just celebrated its 30th birthday, the Oscar kiwifruit brand now looks set to take the recently opened-up Chinese market by storm

**TOM JOYCE**

[tom@fruitnet.com](mailto:tom@fruitnet.com)

**French company Prim'land's Oscar-branded kiwifruit has had a presence on the Far East market since 1995, building up a reputation for its high quality in several countries, most particularly Taiwan, but also Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Last year saw the company sending to the Chinese market for the very first time and with great success, according to the company's Jean-Baptiste Pinel, and this year Prim'land intends to build on that success.**

"The Oscar brand already has good recognition in China," he says. "We are sending small volumes there at the moment, but we intend to increase sales. We participated at Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong for the third consecutive year. It was a great experience for us this year, and we saw that there is definitely room for growth for Oscar."

On 22 October, French kiwifruit exporter Prim'land welcomed guests to its growing region in the Landes department of southwestern France, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Oscar kiwifruit brand. The occasion began with a tour of the orchards and a presentation of the business and its prospects, before an evening reception was held for Oscar kiwifruit producers and their main customers.

"We were proud to have visitors there from Asia," says Mr Pinel. "We were able to show them the orchards



Jean-Baptiste Pinel of Prim'land

and take the time to explain why the Oscar brand is so important.

"People were very happy with the event. Oscar's success is the result of a good economic system based on the high quality of the product. In 30 years, we have been able to develop well, in terms of volumes, packaging and our

ability to satisfy our customers."

According to Mr Pinel, Oscar's growers and Prim'land's vision have been a key combination in reaching this milestone. "For 30 years we have been looking to the future, developing new varieties and paying close attention to the needs of our customers," he says. "This is very important."

So far, the kiwifruit season in France is looking good, he tells Asiafruit Magazine at the end of October. "We are currently harvesting and the quality is excellent," he says. "We have not yet had any climatic problems."

Asked if the expected drop in Italian production would aid the cause of French kiwifruit, Mr Pinel reluctantly agrees. "Yes, it should help," he says, "but we do not want to be considered as interchangeable with Italian kiwifruit. French kiwifruit is widely considered to be superior, both in taste and in shelf life, thanks to the soil and the humid climate in our region."

He says that the company is now confident that it will be able to build up good brand recognition in China. "Last year, our customers were very happy with the quality of the Oscar brand, so we are extremely optimistic," he states. "China has a huge population, but not everyone can afford imported fruits, which are always more expensive. So we must make sure that we take the Chinese market step by step. Asia has always been a very important market for us, but with China now opening up, it is even more interesting."