

U.S.-based breeder Sun World has launched a new grape variety after more than a decade of development, with plans to license as far afield as Australia, South Africa and Chile. 

Senior VP of sales and marketing Gordon Robertson tells *www.freshfruitportal.com* the Autumn Crisp has generated excitement in the industry and will be sold in limited volumes this year from mid-September through October.

"The first commercial vineyards are in the ground and we have limited volumes, but we are investing in more commercial acreage," he says.

"Additionally we have shown it to growers from around the world and they were very excited.

"We have distributed the variety to select countries and based on initial observations expect it to be a great success abroad."

Robertson says the 11-year development process aimed to achieve a grape with three key characteristics - extending the season for locally grown varieties, higher yields with reduced production costs, and desirable eating qualities.

"There can be a lot of hand labor in grape farming with girdling, which is the process of scoring the trunk to help bring sizing back to the fruit, and applying gibberellic acid, but the Autumn Crisp has a natural sizing of 13/16" and larger.

"Having a natural sizing fruit means you can cut out that cost, which makes it very attractive from a grower perspective."

He says the fruit is extremely crispy with "a real snap to it" and is likely to make a big impact on the market.

"The clusters are very large so that makes for a good impression with the consumer, but then you have the eating quality; a crispy bite followed by very sweet flavor, a subtle hint of muscat and a brix of 17 at harvest.

"Competition at the time will be partly with Autumn King but we think Autumn Crisp has a superior eating quality, size and firmness."

He says the fruit's origins date back to the 80s when Sun World crossbred Italia, Muscat of Alexandria and Dzhidzhigi Kara from Turkmenistan with green seedless varieties such as Sugraone.



From a sales perspective, the grapes will be sold in three pound clamshells to highlight the variety, with a unique label that Robertson describes as "very strong and will help create consumer interest and demand for the future".

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