

Pink Lady Europe predicts a drop in volumes this season, but the brand says its focus on innovation and sustainability along the supply chain remains sharp.

A harvest of around 225 to 230,000 metric tons (MT) is expected, representing a 15 percent decrease year on year.

This drop comes as a result of the frosts that hit the orchards at the end of the flowering period, though the apples ripening on the trees reportedly show good quality.

Pink Lady Europe's commitments charter addresses four key sustainability areas, namely the environment, producers, regions and consumers.

Commitments include the roll-out of cardboard packaging for Pink Lady and PinKids apples to eliminate the use of single-use plastics and is expected to be fully operational by 2022.

Pink Lady also signed a partnership agreement with LPO, a member of the BirdLife International network for nature conservation, with the aim of "strengthening the role of agriculture in the protection of biodiversity".

This partnership will give LPO access to 550ha of Pink Lady orchards to collect data on wildlife.

Pink LAB, a kind of incubator for start-ups, helps companies to develop technology to improve the sustainability and efficiency of the production process by adapting to the unique characteristics of Pink Lady cultivation.

Projects for 2021-22 include a partnership with ITK, a specialist in connected services in agriculture, to build a decision support system that will provide weather forecasts, alert maps and cold maps customized to the region and the phenological stage of the variety, enabling producers to improve orchard management and anticipate risks.

"In addition, a call for proposals will be launched at the end of October as part of Pink Lady Talents to identify new techniques or technologies supported by Pink Lab."

On the marketing side, promotional plans are afoot for PinKids, for which a new design was launched in July, including a tie-in with The Minions, while the group's Bee Pink, Adopt A Tree and Pink Chefs programs are set to continue.