



26th September 2013

Smaller, brighter, sweeter but LATE

- **2013 English apple crop is back in the shops**
- **State of the art technology transforming orchards**

The English apple season starts today with this year's crop ready to hit supermarket shelves across the country.

However the crop is almost three weeks late due to the cold spring and early summer which reduced the quantity of apples as well as their size. This year's total crop of eating apples will be 115,000 tonnes, 32% higher than in 2012 but only similar to the crop in 2011. However, Gala - now the UK's favourite apple, has produced a record crop that is 41% higher than Cox, which was the country's favourite apple for most of the last century. Industry experts have predicted that the bad weather has cost them approximately 10% of the crop this year.

Although the summer sunshine from late June 2013 was exceptional, the spring (from March to May) was the coldest for more than 50 years. Cold and wet weather continued well into June causing fruit size to be below average and the quantity of apples to be reduced. The great news is that the sunshine in July and August has resulted in good sugar levels, whilst texture is crunchy with masses of juice. The apples are also redder than usual due to the contrast between the warm late summer daytime temperatures and the cool nights.

Shopper demand for English apples has grown extensively over recent years and growers have responded by planting many new orchards with the most popular varieties. Great advances have been made in orchard layouts and management, to improve yields and efficiencies, but still demand continues to outstrip supply. This drive to produce more has led to English producers investing heavily in the most modern technological advances in the growing, picking and storing of apples.

The popular image may be of old-fashioned orchards with their gnarly trees but the reality is that English growers are at the forefront of modern production developments. **Light spectrum equipment** allows growers to check the interior of apples for blemishes, sugar levels and texture pressures without penetrating skins. **Recycling is maximised** in packhouses, including the use of filtration and ultra violet purification to reuse water. **Camera grading of fruit** ensures consistency of appearance whilst computer controls maintain constant conditions in cold-stores to maximise efficiencies and fruit quality.

Adrian Barlow, Chief Executive of English Apples & Pears Ltd said "This year's crop of English apples is a real treat. Juicy, well coloured but later than usual, the major autumn varieties are about to appear on retail shelves. Contrary to some reports it's not a 'bumper' crop but the apples taste terrific and look superb.

English apples are available at all major supermarkets, independent shops and online from now through until early summer 2014. Shoppers should look for the Union Jack logo to ensure they are buying English.

Varieties at their best in the autumn: Early Windsor, Cox, Gala, Egremont Russet, Zari. 'New' varieties coming to market just before or after Christmas: English Braeburn, Jazz, Kanzi, Rubens and Cameo.

-ENDS-

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