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PRESS INFORMATION

Dole South Africa is now distributing its new Mando table grape varieties in Europe

Paris, June 24, 2010 – Dole South Africa is exporting its new table grape varieties on the European market under the umbrella brand Mando -a combination of Manchester and Dole. After having purchased the exclusive marketing rights in 2004, in 2007 Dole bought the full ownership rights for these varieties, along with the majority share in the remaining Manchester crossings. This totals approximately 900 new potential varieties. Among them, three table grape varieties stand out: black seedless Desert, white seeded Moonballs, red seeded Alpha Red, which are eco-friendly and uniquely attractive. With Mando varieties, Dole aims at answering both producers' high-quality plant expectations and consumer's sweet tooth.

Diversification as a decisive trump in a competitive market

The development of the Mando varieties started in 2004 when virus-free mother blocks were established at the breeding facility in Worcester, a prominent grape growing area in the Western Cape region of South Africa. To date, the 900 crossings are in an evaluation phase and being assessed for any potential new varieties.

"We believe that an investment in new varieties to keep offering best possible produce is a key strategic corner stone allowing us to differentiate in an increasingly competitive market, says Jean-Christophe Juilliard, President of Dole Europe. The sales figures show the growing interest of the market in these varieties: volumes have more than doubled over the past three years. It is mainly due to Asian and Middle Eastern markets, Jean-Christophe Juilliard adds, however Europe has recently become an opportunity to expand them and Dole South Africa has made the most of its know-how to develop grapes that are complying with European consumers' newest preferences".

A unique plant material for a high quality and effective production

Dole firmly believes that one of the benefits of these new varieties for producers will be to offer exclusive access to new plant material that will be more cost-effective and increase yields to produce. This is due to lower labour and pesticide costs, greater rain resistance, higher yields per vine and reduced preparation costs- all of which leads to significantly lower costs per bunch. They also offer longer storage time and shelf life which is a decisive competitive point of difference for customers.

Sweet and eco-friendly varieties: benefits equally reward for consumers

Mando varieties are uniquely attractive to consumers because of appearance, size and taste which are of greatest importance in Europe.

Moreover, these innovative varieties are in line with Dole's concern for environment protection: they require less pesticide, which implies fewer residues on fruit and also comply with sustainable production methods in saving water.



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The marketing of these varieties is now in full swing. Desert and Moonballs have been grown in South Africa until now, but Dole has recently finalized master licenses in various countries such as Egypt for the growing of these varieties. More importantly, the development of these new varieties is now possible in South America.

“Our development in grapes will keep going. For example, Dole South Africa also owns a table grape variety called Tropical Wild - a large red seed grape with a litchi flavour- and is still investigating new varieties according to its continuous will to develop innovative and eco-friendly agricultural practice”, says Gerald Gant, General Manager of Dole South Africa.

DESERT, Black seedless

Benefits for producers:

- Earliest black seedless variety (1-2 weeks than other varieties)
- Rain resistant
- Retains its good condition for longer shipping opportunities
- Consistent high yield per vine in various growing areas

Benefits for consumers

- Pleasing taste
- Longer storage time

Intended markets: Scandinavia, Southern Europe, Northern Europe, UK and Far East

MOONBALLS, White seeded

Benefits for producers:

- Premium grape variety with superior berry size, high demand
- High yield, low labour intensive variety
- Seducing appearance (green to milky white)

Benefits for consumers:

- Easy to deseed when eating
- Unique Muscat flavour with a crunch berry

Intended markets: Europe (Austria, Switzerland, France, Portugal and Spain), Middle East, Pacific Rim, China

About Dole South Africa: *The company was established in 1998, less than 1 year after the deregulation of the fruit industry in South Africa, in order to export on behalf of the South African growers. Today, Dole is one of the leading exporters of fresh fruit -citrus and deciduous fruit varieties- from 200 growers throughout South Africa, Namibia and Swaziland, to more than 50 countries across the globe: Europe, North America, Russia, the Middle East, Indonesia, China, Japan, Korea, etc. In 2005, Dole has established the local market company Dole Africa to manage the sales of products to the South African market throughout local distributors. The head office is situated in Cape Town and Dole's Africa's operation is based in Wellington (Western Cape, South Africa). More information at www.dole.co.za*

About Dole Europe: *Dole Europe is one of the largest marketers of fresh produce on the continent, where it has been operating since 1992. It imports a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables from both Dole Food Company's own farms and independent growers situated all over the world. Dole Europe also provides retailers with innovative solutions in terms of services and products. The company focuses on four core values: competence, responsibility, integrity and enthusiasm. Its network stretches from Scandinavia to South Africa, from Portugal to Russia, and includes 1,550 employees, working at 40 locations. More information at www.dole.eu.*

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