



## **International Fruit Genetics to represent University of Arkansas grape varieties in major world markets**

Bakersfield California, USA.

International Fruit Genetics LLC has reached an agreement with the University of Arkansas to test and commercialize the University's hybrid table grape selections throughout major grape growing regions of the world.

Dr. David Cain, General Manager of International Fruit Genetics, has worked closely with the University of Arkansas to make these varieties available to growers. The University of Arkansas grape breeding program was begun in 1964 by Dr. James N. Moore, Distinguished Professor Emeritus and is now continued by Dr. John Clark, Professor of Horticulture. These individuals have worked for nearly forty years with little fanfare to produce an array of incredibly hardy, disease and weather resistant, high quality seedless table grapes. These grape selections offer growers a greater environmental tolerance and safety margin providing opportunities to reduce input costs. The University of Arkansas research station at Clarksville, Arkansas, where the breeding work is conducted has an average annual rainfall of 50 inches (1270 mm) and an average maximum July/August temperature of about 92° F (33° C) with minimum winter temperatures occasionally reaching -8° F (-22° C).

These conditions combined with extremely high relative humidity cause most commonly grown table grapes to wither and die. However, through years of careful breeding and selection, Dr.'s Moore and Clark have created strains of super hardy grapevines that not only thrive under these conditions but produce abundant crops of large, sweet flavorful seedless fruit. Their various selections have a wide array of flavors ranging from the typical neutral sweet Thompson Seedless, to fragrant Muscat flavors preferred by many consumers, to fruity labrusca flavors found in Concord grape juice. Several of their seeded selections have average berry weights of over 17 grams making them larger than the famous Red Globe variety, while many of the seedless selections average 6 to 9 grams. These are larger than many of the most popular seedless grapes like the Thompson Seedless and Flame Seedless varieties widely grown in California and other regions of the world.

Under terms of the agreement International Fruit Genetics will provide all marketing expertise to commercialize the Arkansas hybrid selections along side its own proprietary varieties of grapes and tree fruits. The University will continue its active breeding and releasing of public varieties for the Eastern USA. IFG will license growers and marketers throughout the world and will coordinate production to provide markets and consumers with a constant supply of fresh, high quality fruit twelve months a year. IRG is also actively pursuing licensing of several other fruit breeding programs, its goal is to provide licensees with a broad choice of cutting edge proprietary fruit varieties tailored to increasingly sophisticated markets. In the western U.S., the successfully tested hybrid selections will be distributed by Sunridge Nurseries of Bakersfield, California. The agreement also provides IFG with exclusive access to the University's unique germplasm for use in its own breeding program. Access to this disease and weather tolerant genetic resource will allow IFG to combine the best of high quality, seedless California varieties with the large seedless, tolerant Arkansas varieties genetic advances resulting in even better varieties for the future.

Dr. John Clark in making the announcement said, "We are pleased that our affiliation with International Fruit Genetics will allow our genetic advances to reach a broad audience of growers and consumers throughout the world." "We expect that this and international licensing of blackberries, blueberries, peaches and other crops which we breed will ultimately strengthen our breeding programs to benefit citizens of Arkansas and the world."

International Fruit Genetics is a collaborative effort between prominent grape grower, Jack Pandol, and Glen and Craig Stoller, owners of Sunridge Nurseries. Sunridge, a major California grapevine nursery, is involved in the breeding and management of these and other proprietary fruit varieties.

For further information contact: Dr. David W. Cain at International Fruit Genetics LLC, 441 Vineland Rd, Bakersfield, CA 93307 telephone 661 203-0141. Or call Sunridge Nurseries main office, 661-363-8463.