

MAÏSADOUR



Agriculture, Landes: Maïsadour signs a partnership with SIKIG to develop the local kiwi chain

Haut-Mauco, the 19th of January 2024. To offer some new markets to the farmers and promote crops diversification, an essential element of agroecology and to preserve the biodiversity, Maïsadour and SIKIG, international kiwi company of Gaves, announced the signing of a common partnership in order to develop a kiwi chain with the members of the Cooperative. This activity, implemented in the 1st kiwi production region in France, promotes the food sovereignty and reduces the imports.

Christophe Bonno, Executive Director of Maïsadour: *“Developing new chains with added value is one of the pillars of our Ambition 2030 Corporate strategy. Facing the challenges of food sovereignty and the decarbonization of agriculture, Maïsadour works alongside the farmers to develop and secure their markets, allowing French people to eat healthy and local.”*



Signing of the partnership between SIKIG and Maïsadour on the 16/01/2024.

From left to right: Julien Pedelucq, Chairman and CEO of the SIKIG Group; Michael Dolet Fayet Deputy Vice-President of Maïsadour; Christophe Bonno, Executive Director of Maïsadour.

SIKIG, more than 60 years of experience and a collaboration with the New Zealand

world leader ZESPRI

Julien Pedelucq, Chairman and CEO of the SIKIG Group: *“After having implemented the green kiwi in Europe in 1964, thanks to its creator Henri PEDELUCQ, at the beginning of 2000, the SIKIG company launched the culture of kiwi with yellow flesh in France. With 200 ha already planted, the company is the undisputed leader of this revolutionary fruit. The exceptional demand of the consumers all over the world augurs some very good years for the producers of this new variety.”*

Since 2003, SIKIG has created an exemplary partnership with the New Zealand ZESPRI company, world leader of the kiwi (700,000 tons).

Thanks to their research station of more than 100,000 varieties, ZESPRI regularly offers some new planting options to the producers of Maisadour. Their sales force 12 months out of 12 on all the continents allows them to promote French production in the best conditions. ZESPRI is one of the most recognized brands by the consumers worldwide.

The territory and the access to water are essential for the development of this production and a vast part of the area covered by Maisadour is suitable for the kiwi.

When the farmers develop some French short-circuit chains with an objective of food sovereignty



While the food sovereignty plan dedicated to fruits and vegetables set by the government intends to reduce the imports to promote the French chains, Maisadour connects the farmers from the Landes who want to start this new production with SIKIG, French leader of the premium kiwi.

France is the 3rd producer of kiwi in Europe with a production of 49,000 tons, after Greece (300,000 tons) and Italy (170,000 tons). The world leader remains New Zealand with 700,000 tons produced per year.

With this partnership, SIKIG, main kiwi player in France, offers the farmers identified by Maisadour a tailor-made support and brings its technical and commercial expertise: turnkey project, management of the plantation site, support for cultivation (orchard and recruitment of temporary staff).

Beside this full technical support, SIKIG implements various initiatives and actions in order to best promote the development of this rapidly expanding sector in the South-West of France: economic support (loan facilitated by the banks), pooling of equipment required for the culture, logistical and human resources support during the high season, housing offer for seasonal workers, complete management of the farm. In this way, SIKIG greatly eases the new installations the producers who want to start this new production.

The Maisadour Cooperative aims for the implementation of 5 hectares by 2025.

A crop that has proven itself in the region with a strong development potential

With more than 20,000 tons harvested each year, 350 kiwi producers and 600 ha of productions, the Adour region is the 1st geographical area of kiwi production in France.

This king of the Adour Valley with many certifications (Reg Label, PGI, organic) has many benefits. It ensures high yields per hectare to the farmers (25 tons for green and twice this for the yellow one in the best orchards) and is associated with a beekeeping activity for the pollination of the crop. It is also a framed and promising market, whose future economic trends seem very positive, with additional market shares to conquer and consumers ready to taste French and quality kiwis. The kiwi has a good image!

In addition, the kiwi production has many benefits: by planting some yellow and green kiwis on their farm, the farmer maximizes its yields as the crop calendar of these two varieties are slightly shifted. Thus, the periods of work on the field of kiwis are alternated between yellow and green kiwis.

It is also a crop that works and adapts well with family life, a new challenge highlighted by the new generation of farmers that want to better conciliate personal and professional life. Good to know: kiwi producer is a profession that gets feminized! More female farmers start this crops.



3 things to know about the kiwi



What is the difference between green and yellow kiwis?

The HAYWARD kiwi (green kiwi) is the best-known variety the most cultivated in the world. Less sweet than its cousin the yellow kiwi, it is brown, fluffy on the outside and tangy on the inside.

It remains rich in vitamin C and it is very interesting for digestion thanks to its fiber content. The SUN GOLD kiwi (yellow kiwi) has more vitamin C than the green kiwi. It has as many vitamin C as the content of three oranges! The yellow kiwi has a thinner and softer skin than the green one. However, it is sweeter and its flesh may seem less acid and sweeter.¹



What is the production calendar (planting, harvest, pruning, irrigation, etc.)?

For each season there is a specific action:

SPRING

In March, the buds appear on the Actinidia (the vine on which the kiwi grows). When the leaves get out of the buds, this is called the bud break. In April, the flower buds become visible, and their number is a good indicator of the amount of fruit that will be obtained during the future harvest.

From March to the end of April, it is essential to monitor and protect the plants against the frost.

SUMMER

The blooming of the kiwi starts in May. Then, the pollination will allow the flowers to turn into berries - an important step to get beautiful fruits, whose actors are insects. To ease the operation, some beehives are often set near the orchards. From May to June, it is time for the thinning: the producer manually eliminates non-compliant fruit to promote the harmonious development of the remaining fruits.

FALL

It is now time to harvest the fruits, right before the first frost, from the 10th of October until November for the French Hayward kiwi. This is the achievement of the year's work for the kiwi farmer.

WINTER

From December to February, after the leaves have fallen, the producers prune the orchard to promote the development of new sprouts on which the buds will appear during the Spring. The pruning is crucial to maintain a healthy orchard as long as possible!²



How to grow the kiwi?

In the kiwi orchards, the producers usually plant one male tree for five females, which allows for a satisfying yield. The Actinidia deliciosa is a vine with very vigorous vine shoots that can reach from 5 to 10 m long in only one season! **To grow these wines, they are driven on pergolas or T-bars to support the vegetation and support the harvest.**

The Actinidia requires the wind and/or pollinating insects such as bees and bumblebees to carry pollen from one plant to another. This is why, the kiwi producers set some beehives in their orchards: in average 7 to 8 beehives per hectare.

Water is essential for kiwi cultivation since to grow the plants it is necessary to have fertile soils and irrigate at the right times. Furthermore, the water helps to fight against the Spring frost, harmful to the buds and the flowers. This explains why **the orchards of the French kiwi producers are located in the alluvial plains, along rivers, such as the Adour and the Garonne.**

ABOUT THE MAÏSADOUR COOPERATIVE GROUP

¹ Source: APEI news agency. [Article Actu.fr](https://www.actu.fr)

² <https://www.lekiwidefrance.fr/le-kiwi/la-culture-du-kiwi-francais/>

Since 1936 Maisadour has been a committed Cooperative from the South-West of France, with a CSR Committed label, placing Man and the Living at the center of its concerns, for a sustainable agriculture, food and society. Maisadour develops chains of excellence that meet the expectations of consumers to promote, in France and in 50 countries, the productions of its farmers. "At Maisadour, we are working together for the success of our members and are developing the future of our territories." The Group, structure around the Agricultural Activities, Seed and Food Business Lines, markets gourmet product under the brands Maison Delpyrat and Comtesse du Barry and Red Label poultry under the brands St SEVER and Marie Hot. www.maisadour.com

ABOUT SIKIG

Pioneer of this fruit in Europe since 1964, SIKIG is the French leader of premium kiwi with about 5,000 tons of green kiwi and 3,000 tons of yellow in the region around the Gaves de l'Adour. The company with 37 employees and 20 seasonal workers support 150 producers for a total surface of 500 hectares of green and yellow kiwis. The region around the Adour River is the historical cradle of kiwi in Europe, the climate is particularly favorable for this culture. SIKIG has developed several certifications for its kiwis, in particular the Adour PGI and the Red Label. The company is also ISO 14 001 certified and takes part in the national program of environmental display.

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