**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate publication FEBRUARY 2016**

**MULTI-NATIONAL JOINT VENTURE LAUNCHES GLOBAL TEST FOR NEW EVERCRISP APPLE**

A historic joint venture agreement has been signed by the Midwest Apple Improvement Association (MAIA) and the International Pome Fruit Alliance (IPA) for the development of the apple variety MAIA1 under the trademark EverCrisp. This is the first exclusive worldwide variety and brand development venture for both parties.

The deal was struck at the annual general meeting of the IPA in Berlin, Germany on February 1. It allows for the testing of the variety and upon success, represents the first step towards the establishment of a joint venture company to exclusively develop and market the EverCrisp brand worldwide, outside the USA.

EverCrisp is the apple of a new variety developed and released by the MAIA after more than a decade of careful cross-breeding. The variety, a cross of the Fuji and Honeycrisp cultivars, was cultivated and tested specifically for the climate and challenges faced by growers in the Midwest territory of the US.

EverCrisp’s most prominent advantages are its appealing, sweet flavour profile and storability, while its suitability for markets across the globe gave rise to the joint venture agreement between the IPA and MAIA.

IPA represents leading apple and pear growers, packers and marketers from the top production regions of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Chile, Europe and the US. The organisation specialises in the procurement, testing and commercialisation of new apple and pear varieties.

MAIA was established by producers from the eponymous apple production region of the US to pursue the development of economically and culturally viable apple cultivars for its members.

Says IPA General Manager Peter Dall: “We are very excited to partner with MAIA in this endeavour for the opportunities that MAIA1 EverCrisp represents for the members of both organisations.”

Says MAIA President and CEO Bill Dodd: “The Midwest Apple Improvement Association (MAIA) is a grass roots grower-owned co-operative that began breeding apples about 20 years ago. EverCrisp is the first variety released from our program. We are pleased and excited to partner with the International Pome Fruit Association (IPA), another grower-driven organization, to introduce and expand the EverCrisp brand internationally. ”

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