

Hail to Heroes campaign shows goodness of fruit is more than skin deep

In an effort to decrease food waste, Dutoit and Good Hope Fruit have partnered with Pick n Pay on the Hail to Heroes campaign, to promote the merits of cosmetically blemished produce.



Image: Supplied

The Hails to Heroes campaign was conceptualised following the impact of multiple hailstorms on all apple varieties over the last 12 months, most notably in November 2022 and again in February this year. It was born from a need to decrease food waste and ensure consistency of apple supplies in Pick n Pay stores.

Don't judge an apple by its cover

Apples have the ability to repair themselves after suffering superficial indentation caused by the impact of a hard piece of ice. According to Jaco Jordaan, technical manager at Good Hope Fruit, hail generally only causes cosmetic damage. "The fruit quality and taste of these apples remain perfectly intact, with the exact same nutritional value and delicious taste as those that are not damaged," he says.

The challenge is that when consumers buy fresh produce, they tend to buy with their eyes. An incorrect perception exists that only perfect looking fruit will be good to eat. The truth when it comes to hail damaged fruit is that, although there might be a blemish or slight bruising on the skin, the inside of the apple is unaffected.

Consumers are used to buying fresh produce based on how it looks. This campaign is a unique opportunity to educate and inform consumers and change this perception over the long term.

Mitigating risks and supporting farmers

Given the increasing electricity, cooling and packing costs, the fruit industry cannot afford further losses, especially when these hail damaged apples are still perfectly delicious inside.



Hail to Heroes campaign - image supplied

Keeping the supply and the price of apples consistent is helping to mitigate the already overwhelming challenges faced by the farming community while also reducing food waste.

Hail to Heroes also creates jobs up and down the supply chain, positively impacts the economy and uplifts the local communities.

“We saw an opportunity to partner with Pick n Pay on this campaign and get this perfectly good fruit to market while minimising the risk of job and volume losses,” says Johan Du Toit, business manager SADC at Good Hope Fruit and Karien Bassett, business manager at Dutoit.

While unique to South Africa, this campaign mimics similar sentiment taking place globally. Various campaigns have been launched in Europe to market ‘ugly’ fruit and vegetables, with a focus on the fact that the nutritional value remains the same, even if the carrot is skew. This has further reduced the need to process and dump fresh produce.

Getting to the core of food wastage

“Following hail events, thorough assessments are carried out to determine the most optimal outcome for the orchard. With early damage such as what was experienced over the last year, we are still able to hand thin each and every tree to remove the worst affected fruit and give the remaining fruit the best chance to reach their full nutritional potential,” says Linde du Toit, head of Technical at Dutoit.

“Hail damaged fruit in no way implies less dedication to the handling and marketing of the fruit. In fact, perhaps even more care is taken to ensure the longevity of fruit,” he continues. “Hail to Heroes not only honours the fruit that braved the storm and reached the retailer’s shelves, but also the farmers and farm workers who have continued to nurture the fruit. Thank you to another hero, Pick ‘n Pay, for stepping up to sell unique looking apples that are perfectly nutritious and delicious.”

With climate change expected to increase the severity and frequency of hail in the Western Cape, Hail to Heroes encourages consumers to look beyond the external appearance and give these hail damaged apples a chance.

Look out for specific Hail to Hero stickers attached to selected bags of apples in Pick n Pay stores. Available in store from 26 July 2023, each sticker also has a code that consumers can use to access [more information](https://www.bizcommunity.com).



Image: Supplied