

DALIVAL

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EDITORIAL

Dear partners and customers, Bruno and I have been retired since the end of March 2026. We have left with many emotions, memories, passions, experiences, shared moments, friendships, and at times difficult moments, but above all, great successes.

We are pleased to hand over the reins to Emmanuel de Lapparent and Jean-René Gourdon. With 26 and 19 years' service respectively, their skills and qualities will help to strengthen and develop Dalival. Driven by our passions, we have always created, developed, tried to progress and improve. Emmanuel and Jean-René, whose strengths complement each other, have already been working for over a year to prepare to take over.

The handover took place very naturally at midnight on March 31st. Bruno and I would like to thank you for your trust over the last 35-40 years. We will never forget that without you, Dalival would not exist and we would not have been able to share these wonderful years with you.

Thank you!

Thank you also to our entire team, who work day in, day out, both in the field and in the offices, to bring you the very best.

Yours sincerely,
**Thierry LIGONNIÈRE and
Bruno ESSNER**

DALIVAL scope



A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR DALIVAL: THIERRY LIGONNIÈRE AND BRUNO ESSNER HAVE RETIRED

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THIERRY LIGONNIÈRE AND BRUNO ESSNER HAVE RETIRED

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For those who don't know you, could you share a brief overview of your career?

Thierry:

I started out in 1987 and have remained in this profession, which I'm passionate about, until today. The company DL Davodeau-Ligonnière was founded by my father in the 1950s and was subsequently developed by Guy, my older brother. I worked with my brother until 2011 and, when he left, I took over his position. My career has mainly focused on sales and variety development. Alongside the French market, we have established a strong presence in neighbouring countries. Between the 1990s and 2000s, we set up subsidiaries and built an international network of partners. In 2000, the Terrena Group acquired a stake in our company and, in 2004, together with Pépinières du Valois, we established IFO, our research and development division. In 2012, DL merged with Pépinières du Valois to form Dalival. We have continued to grow, in particular by setting up subsidiaries in China and India and launching numerous varieties. This merger is a great success both on a human and business level.

Bruno:

When I finished my studies in Toulouse in 1984, I was due to join a family-run fruit-growing group in the South-West, where I had completed my end-of-studies training. It was then that Mr Charles André, the founder of Pépinières du Valois, asked me to work for him. After an unforgettable 15-month period in England and the United States, I found myself in Picardy, a region I knew absolutely nothing about. There I met my wife Géraldine, and 40 years later, I still live there. At the nursery, I learnt every aspect of the trade until I took over the management in 1991 following the sudden death of Charles André, to whom I owe a great deal, as do all those who worked with him. After a period of consolidation, we expanded our presence by acquiring stakes in several nurseries across France and Europe. I have always had a particular passion for research and plant breeding, and I have devoted myself to this from the very start of my career. The creation of IFO in 2004, through the merger of the research and development activities of DL and Pépinières du Valois, was therefore a major milestone. Eight years later, the two companies merged completely. Aside from the strategic benefits, for me it was a way of ensuring the succession of the business, a matter that had always been a concern of mine since the sudden death of Mr André in 1991.

What are you most proud of today?

Thierry:

Off the top of my head, I'd say building a fantastic, passionate team with exceptional expertise; a network of commercial partners, growers, marketers, breeders and technical advisors; the creation of Dalival; IFO's worldwide position; the varieties Choupette® Dalinette, Jazz® Scifresh and Tonik...; the launches of Ifores with its Kissabel® brand (red-fleshed apples) and Samboa® (our three Brazilian varieties), ... and I'm sure I'm forgetting some!

Bruno:

These 40 years have been incredibly rich in encounters and events, and I've experienced some truly wonderful moments. When I finished my studies, I never imagined it would be possible, in the course of a professional career, to meet so many people who were so skilled, interesting, open-minded and pleasant, and that all over the world. What fascinating exchanges! It has transformed my life. The fruit-growing industry is one big family across the globe

What have been the major challenges of your career?

Thierry:

There have been many, and that's a good thing, because I see challenges as opportunities to grow, to question ourselves and to move forward. The most recent one, and very significant, was the crisis following Covid, at the time the war in Ukraine broke out. It was, and let's be honest, still is, devastating at every level of the industry. Nurseries and growers were severely affected, with lasting consequences. We have come through it, but it was painful and will leave its mark.

Bruno:

You can of course imagine that I have had to deal with a number of challenges in my professional life, and it is difficult to pick out one or two. Among the main challenges I have had to deal with, in no particular order, were taking over Pépinières du Valois at the age of 30, the success of external growth projects, investments in major variety development projects, and more recently the handover of Pépinières du Valois. One of the most recent challenges was undoubtedly the merger, and I would like to thank Thierry Ligonnière for his trust. We were a very good team.

Which changes in the industry have made the biggest impact on you?

Thierry:

Without ranking them, I would highlight:

- the consolidation of marketers, who have become more professional and international, with greater interaction;
- the increasing technical expertise of producers and the quality of their products;
- the rise of new varieties and the growth of certain 'marketed' varieties;
- and increased customer demands regarding varieties, plant material and services.

Bruno:

When I look back on the start of my career, I feel that a notable difference lies in the spatial and temporal frameworks. Forty years ago, our daily lives depended more on us. Our area of activity (including our sales territory) was limited to France and a few neighbouring countries. Today, the boundaries of our business are expanding every day. The same applies to our customers. Production, which used to be the centre of our business, now coexists with many other, undoubtedly legitimate, concerns. The world is growing every day and we are highly interdependent on one another. Plant breeding, which has occupied much of my time, has become much more professionalised and may be on the eve of new technological challenges.

How do you see the future of fruit growing and the markets?

Thierry :

The fruit grower of tomorrow will need to be even more creative and professional: organisation, technical expertise, choice of varieties and rootstocks... and move towards genetics that are more resilient to external stresses.

Marketers will need to provide greater transparency to producers – the very foundation of their *raison d'être*. Some will have to adapt their processes if they wish to earn the trust of partner producers rather than merely acting as suppliers. We will always consume fruit: apples and bananas remain two of the major crops in global consumption. But the production of pip and stone fruit will continue to undergo changes: global warming, phytosanitary adaptations, production costs, evolving consumer preferences, the expectations of new generations (quality, health, the environment)... all challenges to be addressed on a global scale.

In this context, human expertise and genetics—with resilient and robust rootstocks and varieties—will be essential to ensure good profitability and address current challenges. I have confidence in the coming generations to overcome these challenges, and in Dalival, which will be among the key players contributing through its genetics and plant material.

Bruno :

I don't believe I am qualified to predict the future of the fruit industry. I have the impression that production will continue to be concentrated in farms with excellent technical expertise, in the most suitable terroirs, unless public policies make drastic choices regarding food independence. Innovation will continue to play a major role in producing resilient products with consistently high flavour quality throughout the marketing season. Consumers will continue to become increasingly demanding when it comes to their food. We must prove to them every day that our product rightfully deserves a place of choice in their diet. And I am optimistic because the players in the sector will always find ways to adapt.



Thierry Ligonnière and Bruno Essner (centre), together with their successors at the head of Dalival, Jean-René Gourdon (left) and Emmanuel de Lapparent (right)

NEW STONE FRUIT VARIETIES SELECTED FOR PERFORMANCE

In an increasingly demanding environment – both agronomically and commercially – variety selection remains a key factor for success. We have selected **6 promising varieties** from renowned breeding programmes, combining **eating quality, consistent yields and suitability for market demands**. All these varieties are **available from our nursery; please do not hesitate to contact us**.

DENFER P.V.R.: FIRMNESS AND CONSISTENCY

This cherry variety is characterized by its **very firm, dark fruit with excellent flavour**. Its slow development allows for optimal colouring and excellent storage performance. The fruit size is consistent (28 mm) and production is regular, with no alternate bearing. A benchmark for growers seeking a **firm, reliable black cherry**.
Editor: CEP Innovation



© CEP Innovation

SCP 342 P.V.R.: SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE

SPC342 combines two qualities rarely found together: **excellent firmness and very good resistance to cracking**. It also offers good eating quality, a consistent fruit size (28 mm) and regular production. With no double fruit, even in hot conditions, it provides a **reliable solution for consistent harvests**.
Editor: EVI



JULIUS P.V.R. (applied for): THE LATE-SEASON APRICOT WITH HIGH POTENTIAL

Julius is a late-season, self-fertile variety, combining **very high productivity with large fruit size (3A)**. Its attractive, bicoloured fruit has **juicy, aromatic flesh with excellent flavour**. An excellent option to replace Farbaly, offering **high yield potential and good eating quality**.
Editor: New Cot



© New Cot

ALEGORIA P.V.R.: A LATE-RIPENING, AROMATIC WHITE NECTARINE

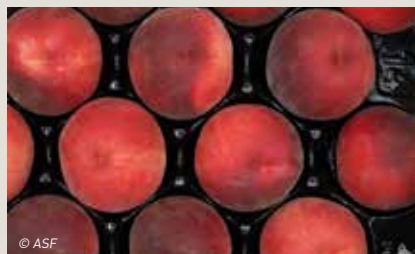
Alegoria is a white-fleshed nectarine that stands out for its **late flowering and late budbreak**, offering protection against frost. Its round, A/AA-sized fruits offer **juicy, sweet, aromatic flesh with no acidity**. Highly productive, it is the perfect follow-on from Tiffany P.V.R. in the harvest calendar.
Editor: PSB Producción Vegetal



© PSB Producción Vegetal

SWEET PINKIE P.V.R.: MODERNITY AND FLAVOUR

Sweet Pinkie offers a very bright fruit with a **thin skin**, in line with current consumer expectations. Its white flesh is **delicate, juicy and very aromatic**, with excellent flavour. The tree, which is vigorous and easy to manage, makes it a **modern alternative to Tonicsweet® Sweetreine P.V.R.**
Editor: ASF



© ASF

HONEY CRISP®: A LATE-SEASON, DISTINCTIVE YELLOW PLUM

Honey Crisp® stands out for its **crisp texture, exceptional firmness and intense, sweet flavours**. With little susceptibility to skin defects, it produces shiny, attractive fruit (size 50/55). Its late ripening allows **the range of yellow plums to be widened with a high-quality variety**.
Editor: IPS



© IPS

NEWS

IFO: UPDATE ON 3 NEW APPLE ROOTSTOCKS

The M9 rootstock has lost its dominant position. Over the last 15 years, Dalival has launched the Geneva® G11 P.V.R., followed by the M200 P.V.R., to address the issues of vigour, replanting and productivity faced by fruit growers.

There are other experimental rootstocks, which are beginning to be evaluated at research stations and featured in publications. Here is what we can tell about three of these varieties*:

- **Geneva 935**: this rootstock has a vigour similar to M26. It is highly productive and comes into production very quickly, with significant yields from the second leaf onwards. This rootstock can therefore sometimes be too vigorous. Like all Geneva varieties, G935 is tolerant to replant diseases, Phytophthora and fire blight. It is, however, susceptible to woolly apple aphids and certain viral complexes, which is why it is essential to graft only virus-free material onto this rootstock. G935 looks very promising, but we still need more experience before launching commercial tree production.
- **Geneva 969**: more vigorous than the previous rootstock, it has a vigour similar to M106. Cornell University describes it as highly productive and tolerant to replant diseases, Phytophthora, fire blight and woolly apple aphids. However, it is particularly susceptible to soil conditions, which strongly influence its vigour: this means that in some orchards, the rootstock has the vigour of M9, whilst in others it has that of M106. Based on American experience, it could be a good rootstock for varieties susceptible to scab, but in Europe we have very little experience.
- **Geneva 214**: this rootstock has a vigour level between that of M9 and Geneva® G11 and high productivity (similar to G11 according to our initial observations). This seems promising, but we have also noted that the fruit size is slightly smaller. It is also tolerant to replant diseases, Phytophthora, fire blight and woolly apple aphids.

We currently propagate our varieties on the rootstocks M9, Geneva® G11 and M200. The other rootstocks mentioned in this article are still under observation.

*Information based on data and observations gathered up to 2025. Depending on future results, this information is subject to change.

TWO VARIETIES LAUNCHED IN 2025: CRISTAL P.V.R. (APPLIED FOR) STRONG IN THE ORCHARD, BRILLIANT ON THE MARKET



Cristal is a new variety from the IFO programme, which has the following characteristics:

- A particularly attractive appearance, with beautiful 'brushstroke' stripes that will be easily recognisable by consumers
 - A very pleasant flavour, a light and juicy texture, and a **high sugar content combined with good acidity**
 - A harvest date within the Jonagold picking window
 - Good, consistent productivity
 - Good tolerance to **scab and powdery mildew**
 - **Late flowering**, one week after Elstar
- Its late flowering, good disease tolerance and flavour profile make it a variety **well suited to northern European orchards.***

*Cristal is available **as an open release variety** to all growers, and planting of the first pilot orchards is currently underway.*

THE PEAR THAT COMBINES PERFORMANCE AND FLAVOUR

Developed by **INRAE** and launched by **CEP Innovation**, the new **Kiara®** pear variety is an open release variety, available to all fruit growers.

The variety's key strengths:

- A bronze-coloured skin with some red blushed fruit and excellent visual appeal after ripening
- Fine, juicy flesh with a high sugar content
- **Excellent resistance to fire blight and low susceptibility to leaf burn and fall caused by summer heat and dehydration**

Agonomic characteristics:

- Ripening date close to Williams
- Good productivity
- **Good capacity for producing parthenocarpic fruit**
- **Very good storage potential**

Benefits for the market and production:

- **A flavour that is widely appreciated**
- A dual market opportunity, as both a summer and winter pear, thanks to the possibility of consumption right after harvest and very good storage potential allowing for later sales
- **Very encouraging results in processing tests**



Easy to grow, easy to store, easy to eat, **KIARA® was awarded the Sival d'Or 2026** in the Varietal Innovation category at the SIVAL Innovation competition.

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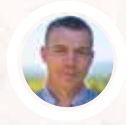
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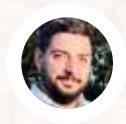
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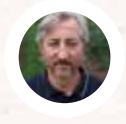
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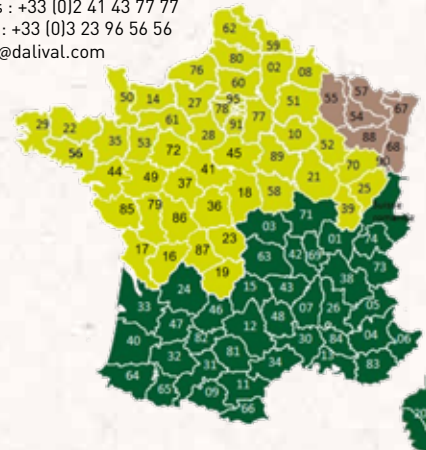
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