

FLIA Innovation Awards at FRUIT LOGISTICA – the most prestigious distinction in the global fresh fruit and vegetable industry

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The FLIA Innovation Awards are presented annually in Berlin during the FRUIT LOGISTICA trade fair and recognize exceptional innovations across the entire supply chain — from the field to the store shelf.

The winners of the prestigious FRUIT LOGISTICA FLIA Innovation Award for 2026 were traditionally honored on the last day of the fair. In the "fresh produce" category, visitors to the leading trade

fair in Berlin chose POMPUR, a specially developed apple variety for people allergic to the main apple allergen *Mal d1*. In the "technology" category, the first prize was won by the Hungarian company ABZ Innovation with their L50 spray drone.

POMPUR apples - a revolution in breeding

The breeding company in Lower Elbe (ZIN) won the FRUIT LOGISTICA 2026 innovation award in the "fresh produce" category by a large margin. With POMPUR, the company based in Lower Saxony, Germany, has developed an apple brand certified by the European Centre for Allergy Research Foundation (ECARF). POMPUR has undergone clinical trials at Charité Berlin / ECARF for more than five years.



The name of the new apple brand is a combination of the words POM (= apple) and PUR (= pure) and impresses with its fresh red color and taste. Due to its low allergenicity, POMPUR is also suitable for allergy sufferers. This is not just one variety, but a trademark for two specific new varieties (ZIN 168 and ZIN 186), specially developed with reduced allergen content.

After 20 years of collaboration with the University of Osnabrück, the German company, which relies on classical breeding, has succeeded in realizing its POMPUR project—apple varieties suitable for people suffering from the little-known but increasingly common apple allergy.

"We have created a product that allows many people to enjoy the taste of a fresh apple again. In Germany alone, there are between 3.5 and 4 million people with apple allergies," explained Maik Stölken, Managing Director. "The success of our apples is due not only to the fact that they are allergen-free, but also to their exceptional aroma and taste."

Unlike some older varieties, which may be more sour or soft, POMPUR apples are created to meet modern taste preferences: red, attractive, crisp, and juicy. One variety is sweeter, while the other has a balanced sweet-sour taste.



The FRUIT LOGISTICA Innovation Award in the "Fresh Produce" category was awarded to the POMPUR team. Photo ©: Messe Berlin

If until now only the old Santana variety was known (which is also known as anti-allergenic but significantly more sour in taste), POMPUR offers a sweeter and crispier alternative for all lovers of the apple fruit.

What is the connection between apples and birch pollen?

In fact, it is about "birch-fruit" allergy, which many people have suffered from in recent years. *Mal d 1* is the scientific name for the main allergen in apples (*Malus domestica*), a protein that plays a key role in allergic reactions.

Mal d 1 belongs to the PR-10 protein family, which plants produce as a defense mechanism against stress, fungi, or bacteria. The highest concentration of *Mal d 1* is in the apple peel, but it is also found in the flesh.

The structure of *Mal d 1* is extremely similar to the main allergen of birch pollen – *Bet v 1*. If the human immune system is already sensitized to birch pollen (spring hay fever), it may mistakenly recognize the protein in the apple (*Mal d 1*) as a threat because it resembles the birch allergen. As a result, about 50-70% of people with birch allergy develop a reaction to apples as well.

The good news is that the *Mal d 1* protein is thermolabile (heat-unstable) and easily broken down by stomach acids. When cooked, baked, or pasteurized (e.g., compote, pie, pasteurized juice), its structure is destroyed and the body no longer reacts to it. Most people with this type of allergy can eat processed apples without a problem.

POMPUR apples entered the German market at the end of 2025 and are sold only packaged (usually in packs of 4 or 6) to prevent "contamination" through contact with other apple varieties in the store or label swapping.

The FLIA Technology Awards - precision and quality

The award for the most innovative technology was given to Hungary. The L50 drone from ABZ Innovation impresses with its precision and performance. Thanks to its large battery capacity and intelligent control, it can stay in the air significantly longer than other similar aircraft, covering up to 24 hectares per hour. With its particularly large 50-liter tank, the L50 achieves 30% longer flight time than the industry average, setting a new standard in field spraying.



The FRUIT LOGISTICA Innovation Award for Technology is awarded to ABZ Innovation. Photo © Messe Berlin

"This award is true recognition of our work and means a lot to us," said Gyula Török, Chief Commercial Officer of ABZ Innovation at the award ceremony. "We are the first drone manufacturer in Europe to develop such a drone. Winning the FRUIT LOGISTICA Innovation Award shows us that we are on the right path."

The FRUIT LOGISTICA Innovation Award, presented for the 20th time, is one of the most prestigious awards in the industry. Two independent expert juries nominated a total of five innovative products each in the "fresh produce" category and the "technology" category from numerous submissions.

The final decision on the winners was made by the visitors to the trade fair, which took place in Berlin from February 4 to 6, 2026.
