

Company looking to market genetically modified apples runs into opposition

July 16 2012, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org) -- Canadian company Okanagan Specialty Fruits has developed two varieties of genetically modified (GM) apples that don't turn brown when cut, and wants to market them.

To do so, they have voluntarily submitted them to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Canadian Food Safety Inspection Agency (CFSIA). The process for both is to first undergo a 60 day public comment period then secondly to have the product tested for health and safety. The CFSIA has already completed the comment period and will begin the safety inspection phase shortly. Meanwhile, opposition to the [GM](#) apples has grown. In a survey taken in Canada, sixty nine percent of

1,501 people polled said they would not support the approval of GM apples in their country. Across the border, the US [Apple](#) Association has announced its opposition to the sale of such apples, suggesting it would taint the image of apples grown in the United States.

Okanagan Specialty Fruits maintains that the apples are not only safe, but would help improve sales of apples as they note that consumption of fresh apples in the US has fallen from an average of twenty pounds a year to just sixteen. They note that many people shy away from taking on a whole apple, but go for slices, but only those that haven't turned brown. They say also that because grocery chains refuse apples that have browned due to bruising, non-browning apples would mean more money for growers.

The process of modifying the apples, first developed in Australia by a team working with potatoes, involves placing an extra copy of a gene already in the apple that activates a self-defense mechanism that causes the gene responsible for the production of polyphenol oxidase, which is responsible for browning, to shut down. Okanagan Specialty Fruits has thus far developed just two varieties, Golden Delicious and Granny Smith which it plans to market under the name The Arctic Apple once they receive approval. Unfortunately for them, the Northwest Horticultural Council, which represents the [fruit](#) tree industry in Washington State, home to nearly sixty percent of the apples grown in the US, is also opposed to the idea. They say they don't believe the apples are dangerous but believe it would be in the best interest of the apple industry to maintain the apple's image as a natural healthy food.

If approved the apples would represent the first genetically modified food sold directly to consumers in the United States. Other [genetically modified](#) food has been sold to the public for almost twenty years, but they have all appeared as processed ingredients.

More information: www.arcticapples.com

© 2012 Phys.org

Citation: Company looking to market genetically modified apples runs into opposition (2012, July 16) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-07-company-genetically-apples-opposition.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.