



The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release
March 20, 2015

Arctic Apple Approved in Canada

(Kelowna) – The BC Fruit Growers' Association stated its surprise with the today's approval of Genetically Modified (GM) apples in Canada. "We have not had any official notification from government, but the company that owns the Arctic Apple is claiming that it is approved," said Fred Steele, President of the BC Fruit Growers' Association.

The byword is 'to let the market decide', but at present there is no distinction in the marketplace between genetically modified (or genetically engineered food) and conventional foods. "The market should have a reference point to make a choice and to protect conventional producers from possible harm. There has also been concern expressed that the approval of the Arctic Apple will impact the organic sector," said Steele. "The government needs to ensure consumers can make good decisions and, if there is to be choice on purchasing genetically modified foods, then the choice should be apparent."

The "Arctic" Granny Smith and Golden Delicious are genetically engineered to modify the gene which controls apple browning. When cut, the apple does not brown, mainly resulting in cosmetic benefit and enhancing the efficiency of fresh cut apple processors. Other apples are available which are naturally slow to oxidise, or brown, when cut.

The fruit grower association (representing 520 commercial tree fruit growers in the Okanagan, with BC annual farmgate value of apples of \$45.3 million) has opposed the approval of GM apples in Canada due to possible market backlash that could impact all apples.

The BCFGa notifies the Canadian public that the situation is, as follows:

- the Arctic Apple is apparently approved in Canada at this time.
- it would take at least 4 years before any significant volume of arctic apples were available in the marketplace, and even then the volume would be very limited.
- it is only two varieties of Arctic apple which are approved in Canada and the US at this time - Granny Smith and Golden Delicious.

The BCFGA represents 520 commercial tree fruit growers in BC.

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