



The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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NEWS RELEASE
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Arctic Apple Approved in US

(Kelowna) – The BC Fruit Growers' Association stated its on-going opposition to the approval of Genetically Modified (GM) apples in Canada, despite the approval of the GM "Arctic" Granny Smith and GM "Arctic" Golden Delicious in the US today

(http://www.aphis.usda.gov/stakeholders/downloads/2015/SA_arctic_apples.pdf).

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. "We regret that the US is approving the Arctic Granny Smith and Arctic Golden Delicious. The apple is considered a pure, unadulterated product, similar to milk. In a 2012 national survey of consumers, 71% said they agreed that there should be categories of food that should not be genetically engineered. Our members would like the apple market to remain free of GM apples," said Steele.

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

- the Arctic Apple is not 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 the US at this time - Granny Smith and Golden Delicious.

“If consumers want to be perfectly assured that they are not eating a GMO apple, then avoid purchase of US Granny Smith and Golden Delicious apples. We will advise the public when the product is approved in Canada, and seek to isolate any damage that the apple will cause in the marketplace by advising consumers how to continue purchasing apples while avoiding the Arctic Apple, if they so desire. We would prefer if the Canadian government would place a moratorium on the Arctic Apple, until we see the result of the market experiment in the US,” concluded Steele.

The BCFGGA represents 520 commercial tree fruit growers in BC and the Fédération des Producteurs de Pommes du Québec represents 555 commercial tree fruit farms in Québec.

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Backgrounder

The BCFGGA and Quebec Apple Producers' Association commissioned a national survey in 2012 on the public perception of GMO fruit and the Arctic Apple. The poll asked six questions about genetically engineered food. In response to the question “Are you in favour or the approval of this [genetically engineered] apple by Health Canada?”, 69 per cent of respondents were not in favour.

Of the 1,501 respondents in the national survey, 76 per cent said that the Canadian government has not provided adequate information about genetically modified food. A further nine per cent said they had not heard of genetically modified food prior to the survey.

The survey asked some of the same questions as a Consumers Association of Canada (CAC) Survey from October 2003. The CAC survey, conducted by Decima, found at that time that 88 per cent of respondents agreed that “a genetically modified food label be made mandatory by the Canadian government”, rather than the current voluntary labelling of genetically modified food. In the present survey, 91 per cent of respondents agreed with that mandatory labelling of genetically modified food should be required by the Canadian government.

If the food were clearly labelled as being genetically modified, 14 per cent of respondents would purchase the food without hesitating, 45 per cent said it would depend on the type of food being purchased, and 35 per cent said that nothing could convince them to purchase genetically modified food.

Finally, 71 per cent of the survey respondents indicated that they are in favour of having a special category of food (e.g. milk, apples, pabulum, fruits and vegetables) that should not be genetically engineered or be free of genetically engineered ingredients.

The poll was conducted between June 26 and June 29, 2012 by Leger Marketing. The LegerWeb panel was polled, with 1,501 responses, designed so that the proportion of respondents, when grouped by region, gender, age, and language, are representative of the Canadian population.

For summary of survey
www.bcfqa.com