



The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association

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NEWS RELEASE
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SURVEY FINDS RISK OF CONSUMER BACKLASH ON GMOs

(Kelowna) – The BC Fruit Growers' Association, in partnership with the Québec Apple Producers' Association, released the results of a national survey on genetically engineered food products.

The survey was commissioned after a BC biotech company applied to have the 'Arctic apple' approved for release. The Arctic apple was 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. BC tree fruit growers are concerned about what effect the Arctic apple might have on apple markets in the event that there is a consumer backlash against the 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 or 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.

The BCFGA represents 575 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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For summary of survey
www.bcfqa.com