

## Apple commission worries about GMOs and export market as Greenpeace promises fight

Genetically-modified apples will be a “Pandora’s box” in marketing U.S. apples overseas, foreign representatives of the Washington Apple Commission say.

Commission President Todd Fryhover broached the subject at a commission meeting in Wenatchee, Oct. 14, attended by about a dozen of the commission’s contracted foreign promoters. Several of them said consumers in their countries don’t want GMO apples and that their jobs will be made more difficult in making sure consumers know that Washington apples are not GMO.

The U.S. government is expected to approve genetically modified Canadian apples this week or next for production and sales in the U.S., Fryhover said at the meeting.

Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc., Summerland, B.C., has been developing its Arctic-brand Golden Delicious and Granny Smith apples for a number of years. They have been engineered to silence a gene causing browning when sliced. Neal Carter, company president, said non-browning and other GM apples could increase apple consumption and returns to growers. But the Washington apple industry has opposed approval, saying negative public perception could hurt apple sales.

“The China market is very against GMO. I don’t think it can get in easily,” Philander Fan, the commission’s China rep said at the meeting. “It’s a marketing challenge. It will be a problem. There could be certification issues,” said Keith Sunderlal of India. George Smith, the commission’s European rep based in London, called it “a Pandora’s box” and a “third eyebrow” for marketers.

“Green Peace will develop it into a big issue and it will be hard to fight back,” she said.

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