

USDA grants approval of nonbrowning Arctic apple

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced its decision to deregulate the first two non browning apple varieties, Arctic® Golden and Arctic® Granny apples, in the United States. It is expected that APHIS' final environmental assessment (EA) and plant pest risk assessment (PPRA) will be published in the [Federal Register](#) soon. According to the USDA's announcement, these reviews have found that Arctic® apples "are unlikely to pose a plant pest risk" and deregulation "is not likely to have a significant impact on the human environment."

These Arctic apple cultivars were developed through the use of biotechnology by Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc. (OSF), a small, grower-led company based in Canada, and other nonbrowning Arctic varieties are expected to follow. Neal Carter, president and founder of OSF, said this announcement is a monumental occasion for his team, "The commercial approval of Arctic apples, our company's flagship product, is the biggest milestone yet for us, and we can't wait until they're available for consumers."

Consumers will have to wait a little longer, though, since apple trees take several years to produce significant quantities of fruit. "Our focus is working with growers to get trees in the ground. As more trees are planted and they come into commercial production, there will be a slow, but steady market introduction," Carter explains, estimating Arctic apples will first be available in late 2016 in small, test-market quantities. And, just like any other new apple variety, it will take many years before nonbrowning Arctic fruit is widely distributed.

Carter emphasizes that consumers can feel confident in the rigorous review of Arctic apples, which have been grown in field trials for over a decade now, and are likely the most tested apples on the planet. The USDA's publicly available risk assessment documents concluded that Arctic apples are just as safe and healthful as any other apple. This evaluation is no surprise to Carter, who states "all we've done is reduce the expression of a single enzyme; there are no novel proteins in Arctic fruit and their nutrition and composition is equivalent to their conventional counterparts."

OSF's consumer-friendly website, Arcticapples.com, outlines the benefits non browning apples offer, including their ability to reduce food waste, suitability towards fresh cut products, and enhanced convenience. Carter is confident that both apple producers and consumers will embrace Arctic apples, and points to a wealth of consumer research to support this.

"We've completed focus groups, online surveys, mall intercept studies and more, and all have demonstrated a remarkably consistent result – a strong majority of apple eaters are interested in buying nonbrowning apples."

Articles on USDA Approval:

- [Gene-Altered Apples Get U.S. Approval](#), New York Times
- [GMO Apples Get The Nod, But Not Much Of A Welcoming Party](#), NPR

Read original release: [Press Release: Nonbrowning Arctic® Apples To Be Granted Approval](#)