

From pink pineapple to purple tomatoes, next wave of GMO foods will have health benefits

Cancer-fighting pink pineapples, heart-healthy purple tomatoes and less fatty vegetable oils may someday be on grocery shelves alongside more traditional products.

These genetically engineered foods could receive government approval in the coming years, following the OK given recently given to apples that don't brown and potatoes that don't bruise.

The companies and scientists that have created these foods are hoping that customers will be attracted to the health benefits and convenience and overlook any concerns about genetic engineering.

What could be coming next? Del Monte has engineered a pink pineapple that includes lycopene, an antioxidant compound that gives tomatoes their red color and may have a role in preventing cancer. USDA has approved importation of the pineapple, which would be grown only outside of the United States; it is pending FDA approval. A small British company is planning to apply for U.S. permission to produce and sell purple tomatoes that have high levels of anthocyanins, compounds found in blueberries that some studies show lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. FDA would have to approve any health claims used to sell the products.

Facing that concern, companies developing the new products say their strategy for winning over consumers is to harness the increased interest in healthy eating.

"This is a new wave of crops that have both grower benefits and consumer benefits," says Doug Cole of J.R. Simplot, the company that developed the potatoes. Many modified types of corn and soybeans are engineered to resist herbicides, a benefit for growers trying to control weeds but of little use for the consumer.

Read full, original article: Next-generation GMOs: Pink pineapples and purple tomatoes