

Booming sales suggest non-browning Arctic apple could be breakthrough product, overcoming anti-GMO fears

Jack Bobo doesn't hold back when talking about the Arctic Apple. He believes the non-browning apple could change how people think and talk about genetically modified food.

"I like to say it's the most important GMO in the history of the world," said Bobo, vice-president of global policy and government affairs with Intrexon, a biotech firm in Germantown, Maryland. "Because it's the only GMO that people will buy because it's a GMO."

Bobo shared that strong opinion late February at the U.S. Department of Agriculture outlook forum, where a group of panelists discussed the future of agriculture biotechnology.

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Biotechnology activists claimed the public didn't want a biotech apple and said the approval was a threat to Canada's apple industry. "The majority of consumers and farmers didn't want the GM apple approved, and yet the federal government has decided to allow it," Lucy Sharratt of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network said in 2015.

So far, the company has introduced three Arctic Apple varieties — the Arctic golden delicious, Arctic fuji and Arctic granny smith. Sale figures suggest that consumers do want a non-browning apple.

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