



## Health Action Network Society

### GM Apple a “No Sale” for BC Grocers

May 12, 2014 Burnaby, BC – A significant number of BC retailers of fresh produce have committed not to sell genetically modified (GM, also called genetically engineered, GE) apples if approved for sale in Canada.

This commitment comes as a result of a letter that Health Action Network Society (HANS) mailed to BC grocery stores and fresh-produce retailers in March 2014. The letter was mailed to most produce retailers in BC and requested that the stores make a commitment in writing not to purchase or sell the "Arctic Apple," genetically modified not to brown as quickly as the current crop of commercially available apples.

“Our membership and thousands of other Canadians are very concerned about the possibility of GM apples being sold in their local stores,” says Michael Volker, HANS Director of Operations. “Even back in 2012, 69% of polled Canadians didn’t want the GM apple. This is why we took the initiative to contact retailers and ask them to honour the wishes of consumers.”

Okanagan Specialty Fruit, a BC company, has applied for government approval to sell a GM apple, or “Arctic Apple” that doesn’t brown for 15 to 18 days after being cut. The company ‘silences’ the browning gene by inserting new genetic material into the apple DNA: from an apple, a plant virus and two different bacteria. The GM apple will look fresh, even when it’s not. The company appears not to have conducted any animal feeding trials to test the safety of eating the GM apples, and Health Canada does not do any independent testing, but relies on information submitted by the company.

The BC Fruit Growers’ Association (made up of both organic and conventional growers) officially opposes the GM apple. Contamination from GM apples would threaten the future of organic apples and the export market for BC apples around the world. Approval could come as early as this year.



## Health Action Network Society

“The company says that if approved, the apples will be labelled with the company logo. We believe this will cause confusion for customers, because it is extremely unlikely a label will alert consumers to the fact that the apple is genetically modified. I expect there to be significant consumer doubt and hesitation when choosing to purchase an apple once the "Arctic Apple" starts showing up in grocery stores across the country. We feel it may be in the best interest of grocery stores to make a public commitment not to sell the apples, therefore providing confidence to their customers that they won't unknowingly consume a genetically modified apple that will likely not have undergone proper testing" says Volker.

To this end, HANS would like to release the following list of stores that have made a commitment not to sell the "Arctic Apple" and thank them for their support in this public health issue.

Representatives from following retailers have signed the no GM-apple commitment:

Freshpoint	Famous Foods	Sprout Organic Market
Nature's Fare	Edible Island Whole Foods Market	Fruit World
49 <sup>th</sup> Parallel Grocery	Jim M Koo Produce	Rock Creek General Store
The Biggest Little Fruit Stand	Ellisons Market Cafe	Olives Community Market
108 Mile Supermarket	Kootney Co-op	Choices Markets
Greens Market	Pomme	Eternal Abundance
East End Food Co-op	Sweet Cherubim	Lifestyle Markets

“We are committed to continuing contacting retailers and grocers of fresh produce with the hope and expectation that this list will grow to reflect British Columbian's demands for non-GMO apples in the marketplace,” says Volker.

“30”

For more information: Michael Volker, Health Action Network Society, 604-435-0512.