GMO Pink Pineapple Is Coming – Ever Heard of Pink Pineapple Disease?

The newest addition to the pineapple marketplace, which will be grown in Costa Rica, is a genetically modified pineapple dubbed the Rosé. Are consumers are just clamoring for a sweeter pineapple with a more pleasing, pink color?

Although a new and "improved" pineapple doesn't seem to be high on our priority list, The Food and Drug Administration has given Del Monte Fresh Produce the go-ahead for their new, genetically engineered, pink pineapple. According to the FDA:

> *(Del Monte's) new pineapple has been genetically engineered to produce lower levels of the enzymes already in conventional pineapple that convert the pink pigment lycopene to the yellow pigment beta carotene. Lycopene is the pigment that makes tomatoes red and watermelons pink, so it is commonly and safely consumed."*

The statement from the FDA gives the pineapple (and genetically engineered crops in general) a glowing review. But why a pink pineapple?

Pineapple Consumption

Pineapple is the third most consumed fruit in the world, after mangos and bananas, with 24.8 million tons of pineapples produced each year. That may seem like a lot, but when compared to other GMO crops like corn (over a billion tons a year), soybeans (278 million), and sugar beets (247 million), pineapple is not a commodity product.

When you consider the amount of time and money that goes into

obtaining approval for a new GMO product, the actual demand for pineapple doesn't make it seem to be a good choice. Are we really getting a new pineapple because we need a sweeter pineapple? So why pineapple? Is it the demand?

Pink Pineapple Disease

If you have ever eaten canned pineapple, chances are you've seen or eaten a piece of pineapple with a reddish or pink hue.

In fruit cocktail, it's easy to assume cherry juice stained the pineapple, but that might not be the case at all.

Pineapples are susceptible to a disease called pink disease, which is caused by the bacteria Pantoea citrea. When this bacteria infects the pineapple fruit it turns pink in canned preparations. Manufacturers can't tell if the fruit has been infected until it has been canned and the disease is expensive to treat. The new pink pineapple is a brilliant solution to this problem. Rather than wonder why their canned pineapple is pink, red, or rust colored instead of the familiar yellow, consumers will see the Rosé pineapple. It will never occur to them to investigate, to discover they are eating fruit infected with a disease. This subtle deception will allow those who sell canned pineapple to normalize and pass off diseased pineapples as something else.

The bottom line? Pink is pleasing to the eye. But more

importantly, pink is profitable (as Susan G. Komen knows). As each new GMO is released it becomes aching clear (if it wasn't already) that the innovations sold as a way to feed the world are actually meant to feed wallets. We see the pink pineapple as a cosmetic choice made to protect and boost profit margins by selling diseased fruit unbeknownst to the customer.

P.S. Don't confuse red pineapple with pink pineapple. Much of the media is making the mistake of showing the "red pineapple" (see image on the right). Genetically modified pink pineapple is supposed to be indistinguishable from regular pineapple on the outside.

Recommended Reading:

- *Scientists Against GMOs – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*
- *Understanding and Detoxifying Genetically Modified Foods*
- *Monsanto Company Profile*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*

Sources:

- *Genetically Engineered Pink Pineapple Is Safe to Sell, FDA Says* – NBC News
- *Pink Disease of Pineapple* – apsnet.org
- *Pineapple: Disease and Symptoms* – vikaspedia.in

- *FDA Concludes New GMO Pink Pineapples at Least Won't Kill You* – grubstreet.com