

An Apple A Day

A Quarterly Health Education Newsletter from the U.S. Apple Association

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

2002 U.S. Apple Crop Arriving At Markets Now

The apples are coming! The apples are coming! The 2002 crop of U.S. apples is now making its way to supermarkets and farmers' markets nationwide. This year's apple harvest is projected to yield 213.3 million bushels this season, or roughly 85 apples per U.S. resident, according to the U.S. Apple Association (USApple).

While smaller than usual – this year's crop is the smallest on record since 1986 – fruit quality and the varietal mix of this year's crop are reported to be excellent from coast to coast, and amongst the best in recent memory, industry watchers say.

Meanwhile, the latest health news about apples is giving consumers new reasons to get their "apple a day" every day, USApple reports.

"The industry is expecting a very healthy crop, in terms of variety and quality of the apples," said USApple spokesperson Julia Daly. "And with all the positive nutritional benefits of apples being reported, this is a great time to eat more apples."

Celebrate National Apple Month

The industry is celebrating National Apple Month in October, *See HARVEST, page 2*

RESEARCH REVIEW

Apple Flavonoids Linked to Lower Disease Risk

Turns out whoever penned that centuries-old adage about "an apple a day" was right: A newly-released study is reporting that components found in apples may keep the doctor away by reducing the risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, type 2 diabetes and asthma.

Researchers at the National Public Health Institute in Helsinki, Finland, reported their findings in the September *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Their conclusions were based on ongoing research of 10,054 Finnish men and women that began in 1966. They studied the potential association between intake of the flavonoid class of plant-based "phytonutrients" and reduced risk of several chronic diseases.

Dr. Paul Knekt and his colleagues pointed to the flavonoid quercetin – a plant-based phytonutrient found most abundantly in apples, onions, tea and red wine – as the most health-promoting antioxidant.

"Of all the main flavonoid sources, apple intake was associated with [a reduced risk of] almost all of the chronic diseases considered," the authors wrote.

Apples: Whole Body Health Food

According to the Finnish analysis, those study participants who ate the most apples and the flavonoid quercetin had the lowest risk of total mortality. High consumption of quercetin – especially quercetin-rich apples – was also associated with the lowest

See RESEARCH, page 4



Let's Get This Party Started!

It's crunch time in the apple industry right now, no pun intended. Coast to coast, growers are racing to get the fruit off the tree at just the right time for maximum flavor and firmness, with picking crews working from first to last light to hand pick apples from the tree, load them up in giant bins and get them to the packinghouse.

At the packinghouse, forklifts race to and fro, moving the bins of apples from pre-sorting to cold storage. Grouped with their brethren of similar size and color, these apples will soon get gussied up with a bath, and packed up in a carton to make the trip to markets across the country.

We're expecting a good year! The crop is smaller than usual, but quality and variety are excellent. And we've just gotten some good news from Finnish researchers about apple health benefits. (See stories, page 1).

The time is ripe to promote apples and healthy eating. This issue offers some tips to get you started; check out our new Web site for even more information (see story, page 3.)

So, let's get this party started!

H-apple-y yours,

Julia Daly

Julia Stewart Daly
U.S. Apple Association

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2002 Crop Promises Variety, Quality

HARVEST (from page 1)

just as the 2002 crop begins arriving at markets. Consumers will immediately notice the industry's expanding production of a wider selection of varieties.

While Red Delicious and Golden Delicious remain firmly planted at the top of the list of varieties grown here, and historic varieties like McIntosh are perennial favorites, U.S. growers are diversifying to provide even greater consumer choice. Popular new varieties include Braeburn, Cameo, Fuji, Gala, Honeycrisp and Pink Lady.

"Every variety brings something different to the table," said Daly. "This year is going to be a great year to try all the different apple varieties - there's a flavor for every day of the week, and then some."

Old Adage Takes On New Meaning

As the U.S. apple industry delivers its newest and best to the market, the latest research news is providing more proof of that old adage about "an apple a day." A newly-released study is reporting that apples may keep the doctor away by reducing the risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, type

2 diabetes and asthma. (See story, page 1).

Recent research is also demonstrating that processed apple foods such as apple juice may provide health benefits. University of California-Davis researchers reported in the February 2001 edition of the *Journal of Medicinal Food* that adults who added either two apples or 12 ounces of apple juice to their daily diet reduced an important marker for heart disease after only six weeks.




The first U.S. human clinical study of its kind, UC-Davis researchers found apples and apple juice may slow the cholesterol oxidation process involved in the buildup of plaque that leads to heart disease.

"As the scientific data piles up to help support the saying, 'an apple a day', should we revise that saying to *two* apples a day?" pondered Daly. "With all the news of apple and apple products' health benefits, it wouldn't hurt to eat at least one apple and a glass of apple juice, every day, for our better health."

For more information, contact USApple's Daly by e-mail at jdaly@usapple.org, or via telephone at (703) 442-8850. ■

Top U.S. Apple Varieties

The most-grown apple varieties in the United States are (based on USApple's 2002 crop forecast):

- | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---------|--|--------------|---|
| 1. Red Delicious |  | 3. Fuji |  | 5. Gala |  |
| | 2. Golden Delicious | | 4. Granny Smith | | |
| 6. Rome |  | 8. York |  | 10. Jonathan |  |
| | 7. McIntosh | | 9. Idared | | |

... And watch for these popular new varieties!

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|--|------------|---|
|  | Cameo |  | Honeycrisp |  |
| Braeburn | | Ginger Gold | | Pink Lady |

New Apple Web Site Makes Its Debut

USApple's new Web site made its public debut Sept. 1, offering a significantly expanded variety of apple information in a reorganized format. Accessible at www.usapple.org, USApple's Web site is now organized according to visitor audience: consumer, educator, media or industry.

"Our new Web site offers something for everyone, whether you are a consumer, a health or classroom educator, a reporter or a member of our industry," noted USApple Vice President of Public Relations Julia Daly. "We encourage everyone to take a new look. "And come back often, as we are expanding and updating the content on a regular basis, to keep it fresh."

The Consumer section highlights health and nutrition information for apples, apple juice and applesauce, and promotes apples as part of a "5 A Day" diet, for better health.

Providing a broad range of information and tools consumers ask for, the Consumer section also includes expanded information on top U.S. apple varieties and their best uses, as well as guides to major U.S. processed apple foods.

This section of the site is expanding to include apple reci-

pes for any time of day, as well as seasonal and special collections. Visitors will also find answers to the most frequently-asked questions about apples, and a special kids' page here.

The new site's Educators section features health and nutrition information for professionals, including research updates and information on the 5 A Day nutrition education program, and USApple's "Apples for Santa" holiday healthy eating campaign.

The USApple Store area of the Educators site offers apple-specific health education resources available from the association.

In the Media section, reporters and others can keep up to date on U.S. apple industry and association news, as well as USApple food and health news. Images from USApple's photo library are also available in the Media section.

The Industry section provides a range of resources to U.S. apple industry members, including crop statistics.

"We think everyone will find it to be a great resource," said Daly.

Have a comment or suggestion on our Web site? Please contact USApple's Daly by e-mail at jdaly@usapple.org, or via telephone at (703) 442-8850. ■



USApple's new Web site offers something for everyone, whether consumer, educator, media or industry. Visit us online at www.usapple.org.

It's Apple Picking Time!

Fall is apple harvest time! Want to get your clients or students interested in healthful eating? Try getting them back to nature with an apple picking outing! Hundreds of pick-your-own apple orchards across the country offer fun and educational experiences for the whole family.

A day trip to a pick-your-own apple orchard is a perfect fall family expedition. Apple picking is a great way to enjoy Mother Nature's fall color show, expose kids to agriculture, and to have some darn good fun in the process.

USApple offers the following tips to get the most out of your apple-picking adventure.

- To find pick-your-own orchards in your area, contact your state tourism bureau, chamber of commerce, Cooperative Extension Service office or department of agriculture.

- Call ahead to find out days and hours of operation – depending on Mother Nature, this year's harvest can be running early or late, affecting hours.

- Dress appropriately – wear comfortable clothes and footwear that can get dirty. Don't forget the bug spray and sunscreen!

- Have fun! Take it slow, and enjoy the peace and quiet. Let the littlest ones set the pace.

- Try varieties of apples that are new to you – including apple varieties that are only available locally.

- Mind your manners. Be nice to the trees, and carry your trash out with you. Take all the fruit that you pick.

- For the best apple-eating experience, pick fruit that is firm to the touch and free of bruises. Once you get them home, store apples in

See PICKING, page 4

Research Spotlights Quercetin

RESEARCH (from page 1)

risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, including arteriosclerosis. High apple consumption was also associated with reduced risk of thrombotic stroke.

The chance of developing any type of cancer was lowest among those consuming higher quercetin levels. Breast cancer incidence was lower with higher quercetin intakes. The association between reduced risk of lung cancer and increased quercetin consumption, especially increased apple consumption, was especially strong.

The chance of developing type 2 diabetes was lowest with higher quercetin intake, with apples showing the strongest association of all quercetin-containing foods. Asthma incidence was also lower with higher flavonoid intake, with apples again showing the strongest association.

"This research adds to the growing body of science demon-

strating that eating apples and apple products may improve health in many ways," said Dianne Hyson, Ph.D., R.D., of the University of California-Davis.

Quercetin is found in fresh apples, as well as in apple juice – suggesting that "apple a day" can be eaten or drunk, in-dustry experts say.

"This study confirms what health professionals have been preaching for years – that there are benefits to consuming whole foods like apples, apple juice or applesauce, since those invisible phytochemicals play such an important role in maintaining

good health," said Sue Taylor, M.S., R.D., director of nutrition communications for the Processed Apples Institute, Atlanta, Ga. She noted that research at UC-Davis also confirmed that the phyto-nutrients found in apples do pass through to apple juice.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2002; 76: 560-568. ■

**October is
National Apple
Month —
celebrate with an
apple a day!**



**NATIONAL APPLE
MONTH**

FAQs

Q What's that waxy coating on my apple?

A Many fruits and veggies, including apples, produce their own natural wax coating to help the food maintain its naturally high moisture content. In the process of washing your apples before sending them to market, we wash off the apples' natural wax coating. So, we apply a thin layer of a commercial

coating to replace it. One pound of such coatings may cover as many as 160,000 apples.

The produce industry began waxing some commodities back in the 1920s. Waxed apples maintain their moisture longer than unwaxed apples, meaning that apple is crunchfully juicy when you bite into it.

The Food and Drug Administration ensures the coatings are safe to eat. If you want to wash it off anyway, try using a soft brush under lukewarm running water. ■

Pick Healthy Apples, Instead

PICKING (from page 3)

your refrigerator, in a ventilated bag, away from other strong-odored foods.

■ Continue the fun at home! Involve the whole family in preparing healthy apple dishes, such as the following recipe for microwave applesauce. Kids will be more inclined to eat food they helped prepare! ■

Easy Microwave Applesauce

6 cups of peeled, cored and sliced apples
1/4 c water
1/3 c sugar (adjust to taste)

Mix all ingredients in a 2-quart microwave-safe baking dish. Cover and micro-cook on high power 6 to 8 minutes. Using a food processor or blender, process the cooked mixture to the desired consistency. For chunkier sauce, use a potato masher or pastry blender.

Optional: To make flavored applesauce, stir in ingredients of choice, such as 1/4t ground cinnamon or nutmeg, 1t grated lemon peel, 1t vanilla extract, and even red-hot cinnamon candies.

Apple picking is good old-fashioned family fun that teaches healthy eating in the process.



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