Papaya with longer shelf life

Scientists at the Institute of Plant Breeding at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna, are developing a papaya variety that would last longer on the shelf. Ripening of the papaya is delayed through the suppression or inhibition of the key enzyme, ACC synthase, in ethylene production during the ripening process. Ethylene is a natural chemical produced by fruits that enhance ripening. According to Ms. Evelyn Mae Mendoza, leader of the project, trees are already growing in a biological containment level 2 (BL2) screen house and will bear their first fruits this year. "It is just a matter of time before consumer could get a test of papaya with a longer shelf life but without the addition of chemicals or refrigeration," added Mendoza. The Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development wants these papayas with a longer post-harvest life, to export to Japan, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates and other Middle-East countries. (AgBiotech Reporter, March 2002)