



## Brazil: A cherry tomato with more sugar and lycopene

Brazilian researchers have developed a new cherry tomato that contains higher levels of sugar and lycopene, and that presents a greater natural resistance to diseases.

According to the Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper, the research, which was led by scientists from the Brazilian Agricultural Research Company (Embrapa) and was performed in collaboration with the Agrocinco company, began in 2007.

The tomato, cultivated with genetic improvement methods in the states of Sao Paulo, Parana, Bahia, Ceara, Goias, and the Federal District, proved to be resistant to different pests, such as pinta-bacterial and powdery mildew (which prevents photosynthesis), and it's tolerant to bacterial spot and virus.

Depending on the culture's environmental conditions and management, The tomato's lycopene content (a carotenoid that fights free radicals in the body and helps prevent cancer, mainly prostate cancer) can range from 110 to 144 micrograms per gram, i.e. three times as much as that of the tomatoes sold in the markets (which ranges from 30 to 90 micrograms per gram).

"Clinical studies have recommended a daily consumption of 10 thousand to 60 thousand micrograms of lycopene for an effective protective action against prostate cancer. We would need 8 to 10 fruits of 20 grams each to meet the minimum daily needs," stated researcher Leonardo Boiteux.

The acids and sugar contents are balanced and the tomato is firm, has a crispy texture, and an intense color. The seeds of the new cherry tomato are 30 percent cheaper than the seeds of the rest of the tomatoes, according to Embrapa.

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