

Did You Know?

You've probably heard of Hawaiian Kona coffee, but did you know that the 50th state also exports delicious fruits with names like "rambutan," "longan," and "dragon fruit"?

It wasn't always easy for us on the mainland to get our hands (and mouths) on fruits and vegetables from Hawaii because of the threat of fruit flies and other pests.

Scientists at the ARS U.S. Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center in Hilo, HI, were the first to apply generic irradiation protocols to control quarantine insect pests found on fresh commodities.

Working with colleagues from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), local growers/exporters, and others, ARS scientists found that a generic dose of 150 grays (Gy) of radiation can effectively control several species of fruit flies—Mediterranean fruit fly, oriental fruit fly, melon fly, and solanaceous fruit fly—in Hawaii, and a generic dose of 400 Gy can be effective against many other pests. These findings enabled APHIS to approve using generic doses on Hawaiian produce.

The ARS researchers made sure that the treated fruit would look, feel, and taste the same to consumers by conducting tests to find the maximum dose the fruit and vegetables could tolerate without a decline in quality.

So the next time you bite into a mouth-watering piece of fruit from the Aloha State, you'll appreciate not only the taste of the fruit but also the contributions of your ARS colleagues.

You can also view a short video on this research here: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/video/asx/hawaii.asx>

Written by **Sean Adams**, ARS Information Staff.



Dragon fruit.



Rambutan fruit.



Longan fruit.