

The Abomination of a Superfood by Graeme Sait

Last year I was a guest speaker at two southern garlic conferences and I was able to socialise with the entrepreneurial and entertaining souls whom have chosen to grow garlic. I wondered how a local industry could survive when prices are four times that of imported Chinese garlic, so I researched the imported option. My goodness, this garbage will never grace my dinner table again. It is the classic bastardisation of a wonderful food! Here are some details of the toxic quartet involved in the cheap import:

1. First, the garlic is soaked in **bleach** to produce an unnatural, pristine look. The intent is to suggest purity, but bleach is a **dioxin**. Dioxins are fat soluble, class one carcinogens and they should not even be in your laundry, let alone on your food.
2. Then, the unfortunate functional food is doused with **maleic acid** to prevent premature sprouting. In continuation of the cancer theme, this additive is a proven class 3 carcinogen and can also create serious kidney damage.
3. The third indignity bestowed upon this medicinal bulb involves **irradiation** to extend shelf-life. The major powerhouse medicinal component of garlic is called **allicin**. It can lower blood pressure, while reducing inflammation and boosting immunity. The enzyme alliinase converts alliin to allicin. Ideally, cloves should be bruised a little and then left to stand for 11 minutes to allow the formation of allicin before consumption. It is important to understand that irradiation neutralises all enzymes. This effectively means that there is no chance for allicin to form. It might look like garlic and you can still smell the sulphur component, but it is no longer the protective, defense food it was designed to be.
4. Finally, the highly compromised cloves arrive on Australian shores and are subjected to a particularly nasty local ritual. Imported fresh food is soaked in **methyl bromide** to ensure that we are not importing any unwanted intruders into our country. This chemical was widely used as a soil treatment to kill nematodes and destroy weed seeds. It has been banned in most counties due to the extreme toxicity and damage to the ozone layer. All other counties that employ this toxic intervention insist upon a withholding period before the treated food hits the consumer. Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries that have not agreed to this withholding period.

Perhaps you now understand why you might pay an extra premium for organic or biological garlic, produced in our country, rather than this imported abomination.