

21st December 2009



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The UdL researching the use of nano-technology to improve the preservation of Grade 4 foods

■ The research has received 100,000 euros in funding from the Ministry of Science and Innovation



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The use of nanotechnology to improve the preservation of fresh-cut fruit and vegetables. This is the main aim of a research project at the University of Lleida (UdL) on what are known as Grade 4 foodstuffs. This three-year project has received almost 100,000 euros in funding from the Ministry of Science and Innovation. The research, led by Olga Martín – who was awarded the 2008 ICREA Academia Research Prize, is focusing on the use of edible nano-coatings on fruits such as apples, pears, pineapples and melons, so that various active compounds can be added to them, thus improving the quality and shelf life of the final product.

The researchers in the New Technologies for Food Processing Research Group, which belongs to the Consolidated Group on

Innovative Technologies for Obtaining Food Ingredients and Products, are trying to work out the interactions that take place between active compounds, the materials that make up the protective coating and foodstuffs. The ultimate aim is to transfer these new techniques to the agri-food industry. The research will make it possible to delay changes in the colour, texture, flavour and nutritional properties of Grade 4 foodstuffs. This will both prevent fermentation and the appearance of micro-organisms that can have a detrimental effect on the health of consumers.

The members of the team, Olga Martín, Robert Soliva and María Alejandra Rojas, will conduct their research in the laboratory and in a pilot plant. This represents one more step forward after over 15 years of research on the most suitable Grade 4 foods that can be preserved using natural substances, whilst maintaining their quality in a canned or vacuum-packed state.

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The New Technologies for Food Processing
Research Group at the UdL/Alejandra Rojas, Robert
Soliva and Olga Martín

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