



Problems of industrialized production



Tomatoes for the marketplace are picked by hand when they are still green and hard to avoid damage. Most pickers are immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries and work as migrant workers. They have to work very hard and fast because they are paid per bucket. The worst problem is that they are exposed to the pesticides throughout the year. More than 300.000 cases of illness among agricultural workers are reported annually in the USA.



Joe Ahrens (genetic engineer at Davis University, Central Valley):

“We have found the enzyme which effects the softening and ripening rates of tomatoes. We have tried to genetically alter them so that they ripen much slower. As a consequence they can be harvested at a more red stage. And they are firmer throughout the transport to the market so that they withstand a lot of bumping and bruising. However at the beginning there was a big complaint that the tomatoes look fantastic but they taste like cardboard. So we have identified the enzyme which is responsible for the flavor of tomatoes and we make sure, in any genetic experiment, that the flavor is transferred, too. Well, I must admit, theoretically you could make anything taste like anything else. For example you can make bananas taste like tomatoes.”

Quelle: Lenz, T. (2005²): Bilingual Geography USA. Materialien EK 17. Stuttgart: Landesinstitut für Schulentwicklung

Die industrialisierte Tomatenproduktion und die damit verbundene gentechnische Veränderung von Nahrungsmitteln bietet die Möglichkeit, verschiedene Sichtweisen und Perspektiven (z.B. Großkonzerne – Familienbetriebe, Tomatenproduzenten – mexikanische Wanderarbeiter, Haltung zur Gentechnik in den USA und in Deutschland) miteinander zu vergleichen. Hierbei ist zu beachten, dass eine Stereotypenbildung vermieden wird.