Uruguayan scientists in Antarctica have discovered a micro-organism that can fight the pathogen responsible for apple decay in cold storage, website *Larepublica.com.uy* reported.

The pathogen 'Penicillium expansum' grows mold in apple bruises and is currently controlled through the use of chemical fungicides, which it can often become resistant to.

The fact the bacteria can survive in cold conditions is what led researchers Dr María Belén González, Silvia Vero and Óscar Bentancur to Antarctica, in search of a solution to the problem that caused millions of dollars worth of damage to the fruit industry each year, the story reported.

The Universidad de la Republica scientists extracted five strains of micro-organisms from yeast found in the soil, which they used in experiments to find a biological control that could fight Penicillium expansum.

Vero told *La Republica* the strain 'Leucosporidium scotti' was found to be the best at fighting post harvest apple disease, highlighting its inability to grow at temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius (96.8 degrees Fahrenheit).

The group hopes its research will lead to production of the strain on a larger scale, but experiments still need to continue to test for toxicity and will likely be conducted by a private company.

Photo: www.caf.wvu.edu

www.freshfruitportal.com