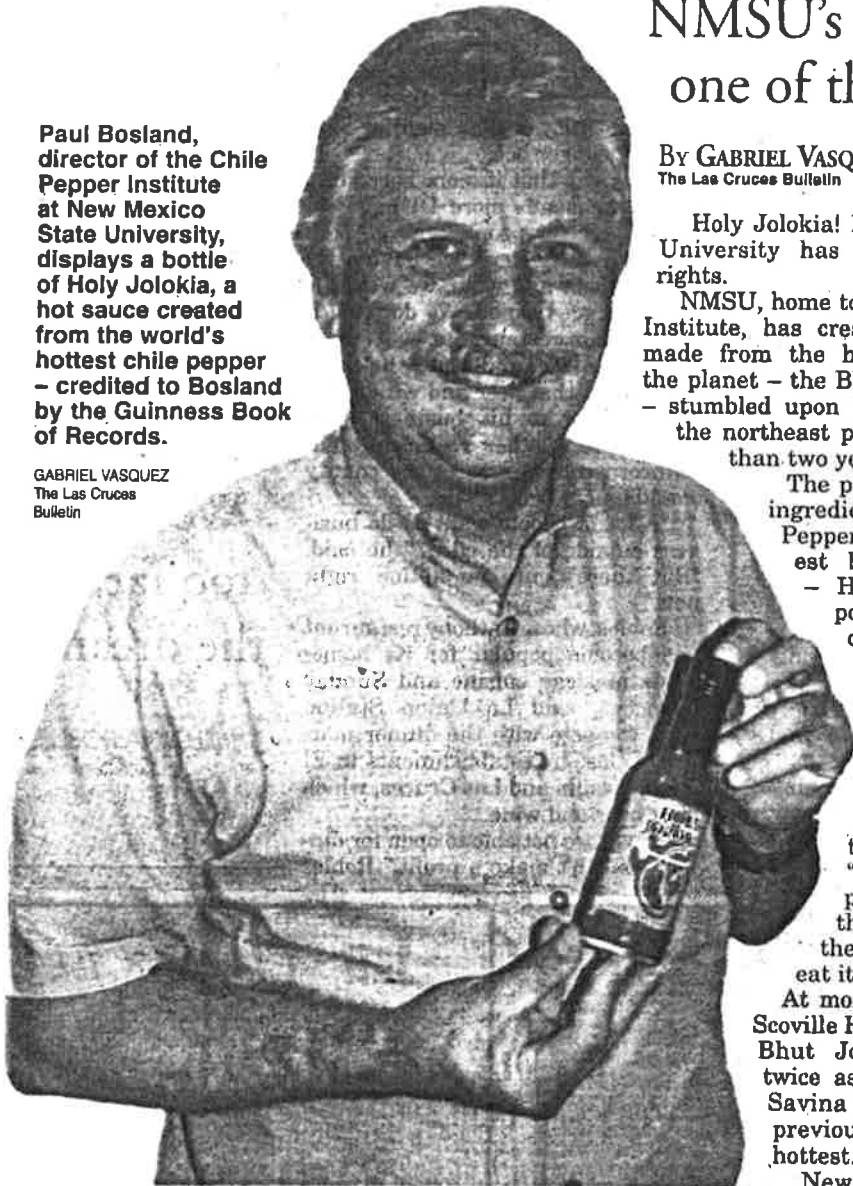


The boss with the hot sauce

NMSU's Chile Pepper Institute creates one of the world's hottest condiments

Paul Bosland, director of the Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University, displays a bottle of Holy Jolokia, a hot sauce created from the world's hottest chile pepper – credited to Bosland by the Guinness Book of Records.

GABRIEL VASQUEZ
The Las Cruces
Bulletin



By GABRIEL VASQUEZ
The Las Cruces Bulletin

Holy Jolokia! New Mexico State University has unique bragging rights.

NMSU, home to the Chile Pepper Institute, has created a hot sauce made from the hottest pepper on the planet – the Bhut Jolokia strain – stumbled upon by researchers in the northeast part of India more than two years ago.

The pepper is the main ingredient of the Chile Pepper Institute's newest business venture – Holy Jolokia – a powerful but savory condiment fit for any hot sauce connoisseur.

"The word 'Bhut' means ghost," said Chile Pepper Institute Director Paul Bosland. "They say this pepper is so hot, that you give up the ghost when you eat it."

At more than 1 million Scoville Heat Units (SHU), Bhut Jolokia is nearly twice as hot as the Red Savina pepper strain, previously the world's hottest.

New Mexico green

chile contains about 1,500 SHUs, while an average jalapeño measures around 10,000 SHUs.

"We did, however, not try to make it one of those insanity death hot sauces, but we wanted to have flavor in it so people could use it in their cooking and their food," Bosland said. "It's intense heat, plus flavor."

The Chile Pepper Institute, considered the premier research facility for chile peppers and chile-related agricultural development, partnered with Cajohns Fiery Food Co. of Columbus, Ohio, to create the product and put it on store shelves nationwide. Cajohns proprietors John and Sue Hard, long-time supporters of the Chile Pepper Institute, approached Bosland about creating the sauce to recognize the institute's accomplishments.

"They're very fond of what we're doing," Bosland said. "They came to us and said, 'We'd like to help you in some way.'"

A percentage of the Holy Jolokia sales go directly to the institute. Bosland said the institute plans to use the revenue to create an endowed chair to ensure the longevity of the program at NMSU, which requires about \$1 million.

"The other thing we'd also like to do is move into a little bigger facility," Bosland said. "We've outgrown what we have here."

The Chile Pepper Institute currently occupies a small classroom-sized office in NMSU's Gerald Thom-hall.

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It reinforces to the world that we
are the chile capital of the world.

PAUL BOSLAND,
Chile Pepper Institute Director



Holy Jolokia

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A teaching greenhouse with different varieties of peppers, a tourist venue, conference, seminar and teaching rooms, as well as a demonstration garden could also be in the institute's future, Bosland said.

Bosland reports that Holy Jolokia is doing exceptionally well in its current market.

"It's being distributed in Germany, Denmark and the U.K.," Bosland said, "and 25 of the 50 states so far."

Danise Coon, program coordinator for the Chile Pepper Institute, said sales of Holy Jolokia at the Chile Pepper Institute's campus location have also fared well.

"It runs the gamut," she said. "There's your general chile-head that loves the super-hot stuff. There are people that buy it as a gift and others that come in just for the novelty of it. People really want to support what's going on here."

Coon described the taste of Jolokia as "the burn you get from hot mustard."

"A lot of people don't even know that New Mexico is a state in the union," Bosland said. "This brings us a very positive image. It reinforces to the world that we are the chile capital of the world. It's also very good publicity for our university."

The Holy Jolokia bottle features a chile pepper engulfed in flames sporting an angel's halo. The label design follows NMSU branding standards and prominently displays the NMSU logo. The warning label reads "Caution: Your taste buds may cry out 'Holy Jolokia.'"

A five-ounce bottle of Holy Jolokia retails for \$10 and is available by calling 646-3028 or by visiting www.chilepepperinstitute.org or www.cajohns.com.