

# New, healthier soybean oil outpacing supply

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The hubbub about the heart risks of trans fats has caused a huge demand for a healthier new soybean oil, prompting food companies to recruit farmers to grow new varieties of the beans.

New soybean varieties contain a lower level of acids that cause food to become stale or rancid. That means the oil doesn't require hydrogenation, the process that increases trans fat content.

The food and restaurant industries have been snapping up the new oil since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration began requiring manufacturers to list trans fat content on food labels.

"I'm personally impressed by how many products I pick up now and read the label and it has no trans fats at all, so I think the food industry has done a great job of making the transition," said Walter R. Fehr, an Iowa State University soybean researcher who helped develop the new varieties.

Typical soybeans contain about 7 percent linolenic acid. The new varieties contain 1 percent or 3 percent.

So far, the new soybeans are being grown in a handful of states, including Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and South Dakota.

Last season, farmers planted

160,000 acres of the new beans. This spring, farmers are expected to plant 750,000 acres, said Linda Funk, spokeswoman for the Iowa Soybean Promotion Board.

"The demand definitely is there and much greater than our supply at this point," Funk said.

Even with the rising demand, it's been difficult to get farmers to choose the new varieties, said Jim Sutter, a vice president of Cargill Inc.'s grain and oilseed supply chain.

"I think there is a reluctance because of a lack of a long history of these things, a fear of the unknown a little bit," he said.

Cargill processed between 25 million and 30 million pounds of the low-linolenic acid soybeans last year, and Sutter predicts the market will continue to grow.

Among the companies buying the new soybean oil is Kellogg Co., which will use it in its Town House and Club crackers early this year.

Asoyia, an Iowa-based company that makes the new oil, said the Kellogg announcement had a big impact on the market. Asoyia nearly sold out of its supplies since Kellogg announced its effort to reduce trans fat content, said Ryan Kinneberg, a sales and marketing representative.



JAN KATZ/ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press  
 Jenny Niblock, right, a nurse practitioner at Family Center for Health Care, and Kelly Focke, a medical assistant at the clinic, prepared to treat patients in the newly expanded facility. The clinic will share a \$10,000 grant from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to better assist diabetic patients monitor their disease.

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