

Reducing Unhealthy Fats In Soybean Oil

(NAPSA)—Conventional breeding and biotechnology techniques are now being used to develop soybeans that will produce oil containing less trans- and saturated fats. This is good news for health-conscious consumers who are concerned about trans-fat—a kind of hydrogenated fat that has been found to raise levels of LDL or “bad” cholesterol, and may contribute to the risk of cardiovascular disease.

This new research comes partly in response to new federal guidelines that will require food manufacturers to disclose the amount of trans-fat on food labels by 2006.

“Monsanto researchers are looking at ways to enhance soybeans so that they are healthier and, in turn, can reduce risks that lead to cardiovascular disease,” said David Stark, Monsanto’s vice president of global industry partnerships. “It is our hope that these enhanced soybeans will provide economic and environmental benefits for growers, and healthier agricultural solutions for consumers who are concerned about their intake of unhealthy fats.”

Specifically, Monsanto is applying conventional breeding techniques to produce a soybean low in linolenic acid. The process of hydrogenation reduces the amount of linolenic acid in soy oil and creates trans-fatty acids. This soybean would produce a soy oil that reduces the need for hydrogenation, and, in turn, could help reduce trans-fats in many foods and even eliminate trans-fats in some.

The company is also applying conventional breeding techniques



to produce a soybean high in oleic acid. This soybean, which also would be low in linolenic acid, would produce soy oil high in levels of healthy monounsaturated fat.

Finally, Monsanto will apply biotechnology to develop a soybean that will enable the production of a trans- and saturated fat-free soy oil, the first natural oil that could make the claim of being saturated fat-free.

The company is also researching other quality improvement traits focused on delivering benefits to consumers. For example, it is researching an oilseed crop that could produce a vegetable oil enriched with omega-3 fatty acids. Typically found in fish oil, omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to play a part in keeping cholesterol levels low and reducing blood pressure.

“Monsanto is committed to developing products that benefit growers, and to providing new products that deliver tangible benefits to consumers, including enhanced nutrition,” Stark said.

Monsanto Company is a leading global provider of technology-based solutions and agricultural products that improve farm productivity and food quality. To learn more, visit www.monsanto.com.