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**SPUDS AND COTTONSEED OIL FOREVER:
ENJOY A SLICE OF AMERICANA THIS FOURTH OF JULY**

America's "original" vegetable oil stands the test of time

CORDOVA, Tenn. – (June 14, 2007) – This Fourth of July, millions of consumers who bite into the all-American snack food, the potato chip, will savor a slice of food history. Spuds aside, a majority of chips produced today get their finger-licking flavor from a lesser-known ingredient that pioneered the U.S. edible oils industry: cottonseed oil.

Deeply rooted in American food history, cottonseed oil uniquely brings out the natural flavor of potato chips and potato-based snack foods, says Dr. Monoj K. Gupta, owner of MG Edible Oil Consulting International, Richardson, Texas.

“Cottonseed oil has enjoyed the benefit of being the gold standard for the potato chip industry for a long time,” says the sought-after snack food consultant. “It offers good flavor stability and imparts a desirable fried food flavor.”

Flavor rules in the competitive snack food industry, which typically consumes a third of total cottonseed oil production each year. But consumers increasingly reach for “trans-free” snacks. Cottonseed satisfies on both accounts.

Utz, a popular Northeast potato chip and snack food brand recently heralded by Food Network darling Rachael Ray, has been frying chips in pure non-hydrogenated cottonseed oil since 1921.

“No other oil brings out the flavor of potatoes like cottonseed oil,” says Mike Rice, chairman, CEO and third-generation owner of Utz Quality Foods, Inc, Hanover, Pa. “We don’t mess with a good thing. Plus, with cottonseed oil, we’ve always been trans-free.”

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Bill Schlesener of Francis-Mustoe & Company, a full-service broker with offices in Bridgewater, N.J., and Brea, Calif., says cottonseed oil offers both functionality and neutral flavor. “For companies seeking trans-free solutions, cottonseed oil has been very positive for the snack food industry.”

America’s Original Vegetable Oil

According to Robert Reeves, president of the Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils, Washington, D.C., cottonseed oil’s positive attributes, namely neutral flavor and high stability, have helped the cooking oil stand the test of time.

“With its unique history, cottonseed oil could be a study in American food history,” he says. “This tried-and-true vegetable oil has played an integral role in food production for more than 150 years, pioneering the U.S. edible oils industry and transcending many food trends.”

Thanks to the cotton gin invention in 1793, cottonseed oil got a “substantial head start” on other oils, Reeves says. While crushing of cottonseed for its oil was documented in the early Hindu medical books, and small crushes took place in European plants during the first part of the nineteenth century, it was Eli Whitney’s cotton gin that spurred innovations in cottonseed oil.

“There was a need to deal with the cottonseed left over after the fiber was removed,” he explains. “Oil pressed from the seed of the plant eventually replaced lard, paving the way toward vegetable oils from animal fats.”

Those early years of the oilseed industry included the introduction of the first vacuum deodorized cottonseed oil by Wesson Oil® in 1899, and the first all-vegetable shortening, Crisco®, in 1909. Short for crystallized cottonseed oil, Crisco is now owned by The J.M. Smucker Company, who continues to include cottonseed oil in its zero-trans reformulations of the popular shortening.

Today, a complete spectrum of edible oils, including but not limited to soybean, canola, sunflower, palm, peanut and corn, are available. “Cottonseed oil production, which constitutes almost four percent of the total edible oils and fats market, continues to fulfill an important need in the industry,” Reeves says.

About the National Cottonseed Products Association

NCPA is the national trade association for the cottonseed processing industry. In addition to the U.S. cottonseed crushing industry, association membership includes refiners, who process cottonseed oil into semi-finished and finished products, dealers and brokers who market cottonseed products, and other firms that provide goods and services to the industry.

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