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NEW CAMPAIGN BRINGS COTTONSEED OIL, AMERICA'S ORIGINAL VEGETABLE OIL, BACK INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

National Cottonseed Products Association Aims to Educate Food Processors, Restaurateurs and Consumers on the Health and Flavor Benefits of Cottonseed Oil

CORDOVA, Tenn. – (April 24, 2007) – Long before canola, sunflower, soy and peanut oil, there was cottonseed oil – America's original vegetable oil. Despite its prevalence in a multitude of everyday foods, from potato chips to salad dressings to baked goods, cottonseed oil isn't a household name. This year, the National Cottonseed Products Association (NCPA) aims to change that by launching an educational marketing campaign that spotlights the nutritious – and delicious – aspects of cottonseed oil.

National *Trans* Fat Discussion Thrusts Edible Oils into the Spotlight

Spurred by the growing movement to reduce *trans* fats from the diets of Americans, members of the cottonseed oil industry are ramping up efforts to reintroduce cottonseed oil as a versatile, *trans*-free oil, ideally suited to meet the needs of food processors, foodservice operators and restaurateurs.

"As consumer demand for *trans*-free foods increases, food processors and restaurants are scrambling to reformulate their recipes. The time is right to reintroduce cottonseed oil, while providing the food industry with as much information as possible," says Ben Morgan, executive vice president of NCPA.

According to Robert Reeves, president of the Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils, Washington, D.C., cottonseed oil is a good solution for many end-uses where the goal is to eliminate or minimize the *trans* fat content in foods.

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“Cottonseed oil fits into all the various ways of creating a *trans*-free product, including high-stability cooking and salad liquids, shortenings and spreads,” Reeves says.

Cottonseed oil is naturally stable, and so it does not require hydrogenation, the process that produces *trans* fatty acids. Additionally, the American Heart Association classifies cottonseed oil as a “heart healthy” unsaturated vegetable oil, when used in moderation.

Cottonseed Oil the “Gold Standard”

According to Dr. Clay King, associate professor and oilseed researcher at Texas Woman’s University, Denton, Texas, cottonseed oil’s natural stability is just the beginning of why it’s such an ideal vegetable oil. “It’s well known for its taste-test winning, neutral flavor and its flavor stability.”

Adds Morgan, “When it comes to flavor, cottonseed oil has always had the corner on the market. In fact, cottonseed oil has long been the ‘gold standard’ in potato chip and snack food production.”

Many potato chip manufacturers use cottonseed oil exclusively for frying their products because of the good flavor it helps them achieve, he notes.

Educational Campaign Takes Shape

To be sure, cottonseed oil maintains an important position today as a cooking, frying and salad oil among foodservice operators and snack food manufacturers, thanks to its neutral flavor, stability and availability in commercial quantities. However, cottonseed oil has fallen into the shadow of more dominant vegetable oils in recent years. Soybean oil, for example, leads the domestic vegetable oil market with 80 percent of the U.S. market share of edible oils. Meanwhile, smaller-scale oils, like canola and sunflower, dominate mindshare thanks to aggressive marketing.

To kick-off the educational campaign for cottonseed oil, NCPA is interviewing key restaurateurs, food processors and foodservice operators to gauge their understanding of cottonseed oil and learn what they’re looking for in a vegetable oil as they reformulate.

Once NCPA has finished surveying key food industry members, the organization will invest in creating an educational website and other tools that speak to the needs of the food industry. “We want to give the industry the information they need, and encourage them to give cottonseed oil a try,” Morgan says.

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In addition to reaching out to the food industry, NCPA hopes to extend cottonseed oil education on to the consumer level.

“Now that consumers are reading food labels more closely and asking what their food is being cooked in, we want to reassure them that cottonseed oil is a healthy choice,” Morgan says.

For more information on National Cottonseed Products Association and cottonseed oil, contact Amy Dennis or Heidi Nelson at 503-274-0086.

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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