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IN A TIGHT ECONOMY, FOOD INDUSTRY EXAMINES COOKING OIL OPTIONS FOR COST SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES

Offering extended fry life and longer shelf life, cottonseed oil proves a budget-wise solution

CORDOVA, Tenn. – (Dec. 19, 2008) – In the midst of the national economic downturn, the food industry is ravenous for cost-effective ingredients. Even routine ingredients, like cooking oil, are being scrutinized. Cottonseed oil, a naturally stable and *trans* fat free plant oil, is one product that industry insiders are recommending.

"Cottonseed oil can be extremely cost-effective when you factor in extended shelf- and fry life," says Ben Morgan, executive vice president, National Cottonseed Products Association, Cordova, Tenn.

"While companies are looking to short-term compromises, such as serving smaller portions or substituting flank steak for filet mignon, one thing that shouldn't be compromised is the quality of cooking oil," he says. "Premium-quality cottonseed oil offers a built-in stability and resistance to flavor reversion that pays off in less oil turnover and longer shelf life."

According to Dr. Monoj K. Gupta, owner of MG Edible Oil Consulting International, an edible oil consultancy for the oil manufacturing and salty snack food industries, the increased fry life offered by cottonseed oil can easily counter the initial higher price of the oil.

"In restaurant frying, cottonseed oil may last 10 to 15 percent longer, offering some financial benefit to the restaurant owner," he says.

Cottonseed oil is *trans*-free because it does not contain linolenic acid and does not have to be hydrogenated. Higher saturation and levels of gamma and delta tocopherols make it more stable.

Cottonseed oil's stability also pays off in extended shelf life for packaged foods, like potato chips, Gupta says. "It is shelf-stable at the end of the code date, so chips maintain their good flavor.

Sans the *trans*, but at what cost?

Over the past two years, the food industry has been rightly focused on removing harmful *trans* fats, created when oils are partially hydrogenated for more stability and performance.

"In the quest to remove *trans* fats, however, some restaurants and manufacturers are now discovering that their oil replacement is lacking the performance and flavor they desire," Gupta says.

Under extended frying circumstances, many oils will break down, negatively impacting the food's finished flavor. Cottonseed oil's inherent stability makes it one of the few oils that can promise both zero *trans* and nearly zero flavor reversion. Cottonseed oil is well known for its desirable neutral flavor.

Fishing for the perfect oil

Fish and chips chain Anthony's Fish Grotto is a classic example of a restaurant that relies on the high performance of cottonseed oil. The San Diego-based restaurant group has fried only in 100 percent cottonseed oil for more than 62 years, and despite oil price fluctuations, has always found it to be the most economical choice.

In fact, the restaurant has experimented with various highly engineered oils over the years.

"We always come back to pure cottonseed oil," says co-owner Craig Ghio. "Its stability and performance never falter. And since cottonseed oil doesn't impart its own flavor, we're able to extend fry life and maximize oil usage, while preparing a catch-of-the-day that's fresh and flavorful."

About the National Cottonseed Products Association

NCPA is the national trade association for the cottonseed processing industry. For more information, visit www.cottonseedoil.com.

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