

Healthier Cooking Oils



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Making sense of intellectual property

Working Together Toward New Solutions

For decades, the food industry has been seeking new and improved ingredients to help them develop “healthier” options that meet today’s consumer demands – great tasting, fewer calories, improved fat content and better nutrients – and also meet their manufacturing needs such as stability, shelf life and price. Thanks to advances in plant breeding, gene sequencing and genetic engineering, agricultural technology companies are increasingly becoming new partners to the food industry in the rapidly evolving area of healthier oils. The time and investment has been significant for each new oil. However, with intellectual property protections, companies are able to recoup costs and re-invest in creating newer, even healthier products.

Several improved oils are on the market or close to reaching it today:

- Genetically modified soybean whose oil has zero grams of trans fats and 20% less saturated fat than commodity soy oils. Plenish also has an oleic fatty acid content of >75%, which gives it frying and shelf-stability comparable to that of hydrogenated soybean oils.
- High-oleic soybean containing 0 trans fat and 60% less saturated fat, whose oil provides long shelf life for fried and finished foods. It has replaced trans fats in the production of French fries, potato chips and doughnuts.
- Canola high in healthy monounsaturated oleic acid and low in linolenic acid and saturated fat with a clean, light flavor that does not overshadow other food ingredients. It can be used as a frying oil or in bakery items where more solid fats are required.

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The next wave of innovation in this area is focused on micronutrients: specifically omega-3s and other fatty acids. Products on the horizon include soybean and canola oils that add nutritious omega-3s to foods without the flavor, stability and shelf-life issues associated with fish oil, currently a main source for omega-3.



Capturing Value Fuels Innovation

Each of these products is based on patented technologies developed by researchers across a range of companies and industries, from seed producers and ingredient suppliers to food manufacturers. Bringing a new oilseed to market is a big leap of faith for companies who hold these patents, as it can take nearly 13 years and up to \$136 million to bring a genetically modified seed product to the market.

For a seed company, finding the best traits and varieties is only the beginning. The more difficult challenge often is finding a food manufacturer willing to give the new oil a chance and adjust its processes and recipes to suit the new oil. Even then, it's the consumer who has the final say as to whether the product is successful. In this environment, it's easy to see why companies who hold patents rely on intellectual property protections to ensure their efforts and investments have not been in vain. In the end, consumers will benefit when companies are able to see the value of making investments into the area of heart-healthy oils.

THE PROMISE OF BETTER HEALTH

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States estimates that reducing harmful fats in the food supply can prevent up to 20,000 heart attacks and an additional 7,000 deaths in the U.S. alone each year. Around the world, heart disease remains the leading cause of death.

The development of healthier cooking oils, which reduce harmful fats in our diet, shows us that innovation in agriculture can produce better outcomes for our nutrition and public health. Achieving this goal can be challenging and resource-intensive, though. Strong intellectual property protections ensure companies are able to continually reinvest in improving our health through tasty, healthy foods that nourish our growing world population.