

By Ron F. Meyer, Area Extension Agronomist

A ground-breaking study from The Pennsylvania State University demonstrated that trans fat-free NuSun sunflower oil provides not only a technical solution, but also a healthy solution to frying and manufacturing heart healthy foods. Substituting only two tablespoons per day of NuSun sunflower oil for saturated fat significantly lowered total cholesterol by nearly five percent and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) by nearly six percent.

Subjects on the NuSun diet lowered blood cholesterol levels compared with the average American diet, whereas a diet with olive oil did not.

The article “Balance of Unsaturated Fatty Acids is Important to a Cholesterol-Lowering Diet: Comparison of Mid-Oleic Sunflower Oils and Olive Oil on Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors,” is published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

In this tightly controlled clinical study involving thirty-one men and women with elevated cholesterol levels, study participants followed three diets—NuSun sunflower oil, olive oil, and the average American diet. The diets including NuSun sunflower oil and olive oil had similar dietary fat (30 percent) and cholesterol profiles, while the average American diet was slightly higher in both total (34 percent) and saturated fat, but still low in total cholesterol. NuSun sunflower oil was used for frying and as an ingredient in foods like muffins, sauces, spreads, granola bars and salad dressings.

Head researcher, Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton from Penn State University, hypothesizes that it is the unique balance of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids in NuSun that provides the cholesterol lowering benefits.

Dr. Kris-Etherton says, “This study demonstrates that the substitution of just a small amount of a healthy oil like NuSun for saturated or trans fat can significantly impact heart health.” In addition to being naturally trans fat-free, NuSun sunflower oil is highly stable, mid-oleic sunflower oil that retains polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Healthy sunflower oil

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

With a fat profile that is predominantly monounsaturated, the oil is also low in saturated fat (less than 10 percent), which complies with the new 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines.

The United States Food and Drug Administration is requiring all processed foods list trans fat on food labels as of January 2006.

Additionally, Larry Kleingartner, Executive Director of the National Sunflower Association, says “In order to meet consumer demands for healthier options while dining out, restaurants and food chains are looking for highly stable, trans-free oil alternatives to improve the health profile of the foods being served.”

NuSun sunflower oil performs well in extremely high cooking and frying temperatures and does not require hydrogenation like many other commercial-use oils. The oil is a good replacement for solid fats that are sources of trans fats used for commercial food manufacturing and by restaurants.

In addition, the natural stability of NuSun sunflower oil provides excellent shelf-life characteristics and has a clean, light taste.

Many major food manufacturers have already started using NuSun sunflower oil in their commercial products.