



Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

Monsanto soybean trait for lower saturated fat gets USDA deregulation

By Caroline Scott-Thomas, 20-Dec-2011

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The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has deregulated the biotech trait in Monsanto's Vistive Gold soybeans, allowing the production of low saturated- and trans-fat oils from the beans within the United States.

The agricultural giant's Vistive Gold soybeans provide oil high in monounsaturated fatty acids and low in saturated fat, containing about 60% less than conventional soybean oils. Soybeans are generally high in linolenic acid, which reduces the shelf life and stability of products made from soybean oil. To overcome this problem, soybean oil is often partially hydrogenated to reduce linolenic acid levels. But this in turn produces artery-clogging trans fatty acids.

Monsanto already has low-linolenic soybean oils on the market under its Vistive brand – KFC and Kellogg's have both used Vistive to slash trans fats from their products – but the company claims that its new generation traits confer "*significantly extended fry life*" and are more stable at high temperatures than either existing Vistive oils or conventional soybean oils.

Monsanto global technology lead for food quality traits Joe Cornelius said: "*With the availability of Vistive Gold soybeans, farmers will soon be able to deliver an economical and sustainable source of nutritionally improved soybean oil to consumers and food companies.*"

"Vistive Gold soybeans are a breakthrough innovation that represent years of collaboration across the food supply chain. Monsanto worked closely with the food industry, health and nutrition communities and agricultural sector to bring a biotechnology trait with direct consumer benefit. The result, Vistive Gold soybeans, is one step closer to reality with the recent USDA deregulation."

The USDA deregulation of the MON 87705 trait means that field testing and seed production can take place in United States, under strict guidelines until export markets provide regulatory approvals, according to the company. The deregulation completes the regulatory process in the United States, and the trait has also been approved in Canada.

The Vistive Gold soybeans will be combined with the company's Genuity Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybeans, to increase yield for farmers, as well as providing nutritionally improved oil.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a letter of no objection the soybeans were generally recognized as safe (GRAS) in May 2010, enabling food makers to test the soy oil.

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