

# *Wisconsin Soy Scoop*

News from the Wisconsin Soybean Programs

April 2006

## **Soy Foods Provide Healthy Choices**

April is National Soy Foods month and the Wisconsin soybean groups are busy promoting the good nutrition of foods made from soybean products.

Soy protein products are good substitutes for animal products because soy offers a "complete" protein profile that contains all the amino acids essential to human nutrition. More importantly soy protein products can replace animal-based foods--which also have complete proteins but tend to contain more fat, especially saturated fat--without requiring major adjustments elsewhere in the diet.

Recently, the American Heart Association noted that soy products are beneficial to cardiovascular and overall health due to their high content of fiber, vitamins, minerals and low saturated fat and cholesterol. Another study, published last month in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggests that people interested in lowering their cholesterol should probably acquire a taste for soy foods tofu and oatmeal. Evidence also suggests that soy improves heart health by decreasing triglycerides and improving the elasticity of blood vessels.

The most common sources of soy protein are as follows:

**Tofu** is made from cooked and puréed soybeans processed into a custard-like cake. It has a neutral flavor and can be stir-fried, grilled, mixed into smoothies or blended into a cream cheese texture for use in dips or as a cheese substitute. It comes in firm, soft and silken textures.

**Soymilk** is produced by grinding and mixing soybeans with water. Often fortified with calcium, soymilk comes plain or in flavors such as vanilla, chocolate and coffee and is an alternative to dairy products. Enriched soymilk has no lactose and little or no saturated fat, but it has as much calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin D as dairy milk.

**Soy flour** is created by grinding roasted soybeans into a fine powder. The flour adds protein to cookies and cakes and, because it adds moisture, can be used as an egg substitute. It also can be found in cereals, pancake mixes, frozen desserts, and other common foods.

**Textured soy protein** is made from defatted soy flour, which is compressed and dehydrated and is used as a meat substitute. Soy protein is found in many products such as soy sausages, burgers, franks, and cold cuts, as well as soy yogurts and cheese, all of which are good substitutes for their animal-based counterparts.

**Tempeh** is made from whole, cooked soybeans formed into a chewy cake and used as a meat substitute.

**Miso** is a fermented soybean paste used for seasoning and in soup stock.

**Edamame** are green, sweet soybeans that can be added to salads and soups, adding a high level of protein and taste.

The health benefits of soyfoods extend far beyond the heart. Some cancer researchers believe that prostate and colon cancer progression can be slowed by dietary changes that include soy foods. Research on menopause indicates that soy may offer relief for women experiencing hot flashes. Other research shows soy products play a strong role in bone health since many soy foods contain calcium equivalent to dairy products.

This month's issue of the *American Dietetic Association Journal* includes a study showing that offering soymilk to elementary school students boosts overall milk consumption from the lunch line while also reducing the amount of saturated fat they consumed. By the end of the four-week study, which was conducted at three ethnically diverse elementary schools in Florida, almost a quarter of the lunch-line students were choosing soymilk over cow's milk. This increased total, calcium-rich beverage selection more than 4 percent and increased calcium consumption per gram of saturated fat consumed from calcium-rich beverages from 194 milligrams to 237 milligrams.

Additional information on soy foods are available from the Wisconsin Soybean Association by calling 608-274-7522 or on the Internet at several websites including: <http://www.talksoy.com> , <http://www.soyfoods.com> , <http://www.soycooking.com> , <http://www.soyfoods.org> , [www.soyfoodsillinois.uiuc.edu](http://www.soyfoodsillinois.uiuc.edu) ###