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OILSEEDS NEWS

HEALTHIER CANOLA OIL IS TOP PRIORITY

New canola varieties which produce oils that can withstand higher cooking temperatures, and have less need for processing could replace 50,000 tonnes of imports of palm oil and tallow – the equivalent of 125,000 tonnes of canola grain – creating an additional \$80 million in the processed food industry in Australia, according to the oilseeds industry's peak body.



Oils ain't oils: Nutrihealth canola breeder Dr Nelson Gororo is developing specialty canola, including herbicide-tolerant varieties.

The Australian Oilseeds Federation (AOF) lists the development of the specialty canola as its top priority – and growers in parts of southern NSW and Victoria can now capitalise on new varieties that have been bred for Australian conditions.

With tallow and palm oil, accounting for almost 40 per cent of the oils and fats usage in Australia, the long-term potential for these canola varieties is substantial.

The new canola varieties have higher levels of a component of the oil, called oleic acid, and lower levels of linolenic acid than current varieties – and have been coined ‘HOLL’ (‘high oleic/low linolenic’).

The oil produced from these new varieties is more stable at higher temperatures, so it performs better in frying applications and still has the advantage of very low levels of saturated fats and no trans fats.

In Canada, four million hectares were sown to canola last season including 200,000 hectares of HOLL varieties. This is expected to jump to one-third of the total Canadian canola crop once herbicide tolerant, hybrid varieties become available.

These varieties traditionally have a yield penalty associated with them, but the yield barrier has been broken in Australia by Nutrihealth, a subsidiary of Nufarm.

In fact, last year in National Variety Trials Nutrihealth’s non-herbicide tolerant HOLL “Monola” variety NMC130 was the highest yielding non-hybrid, non-herbicide tolerant variety on average in NSW and Victoria, with a good oil content and excellent blackleg resistance.

Dr Keith White, Nutrihealth Technical Director said that this was the first time that an Australian-developed HOLL canola had yielded comparably to some of the leading non-specialty conventional or Clearfield varieties.

“The variety’s performance was very consistent across the trials, including in all average to better rainfall zones of central and southern NSW and north-central and western Victoria, which are the primary target regions for production of the specialty canola variety,” he said.

The company also produced its first triazine tolerant (TT) low linolenic acid variety, and expects to release two more next year with strong blackleg resistance and competitive yields.

“The success of specialty canola will be dependent on having agronomically competitive, herbicide-tolerant varieties available for growers across a broad range of areas,” said Nutrihealth General Manager, Paul van Heerwaarden.

He said that growers were showing strong interest in the new specialty TT varieties which should enable a rapid increase in the production of specialty canola and the commercial development of oil products.

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries is collaborating with Cargill, also with the aim of producing higher yielding specialty varieties suited to local conditions.

Robert Green, General Manager for Grains and Oilseeds at Cargill Australia said that the company has recruited selected growers in an area bounded by Yarrawonga and Temora to grow a few thousand hectares of specialty canola.

Cargill Australia is anticipating the opening of a major new global market for HOLL canola varieties, to meet the expected demand for the healthier oils.

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