Heart Healthy Soybean Oil Q&A

Top-Line Talking Points

- The FDA approved Bunge’s petition to claim soybean oil as heart healthy because several human clinical studies showed soybean oil may reduce coronary heart disease risk and lower LDL-cholesterol when replacing saturated fat and not increasing calories.

- The claim can be leveraged by a number of products that commonly use soybean oils, including snacks, dressings, bottled oils, culinary spreads, baked goods and more.

- Bunge decided to file the soybean heart health petition on behalf of food manufacturers eager to develop heart healthy products, consumers looking to improve heart health, and soybean farmers who thrive when demand increases.

- Through a versatile portfolio and powerful supply chain, Bunge enables broad access to soybean oil and its health benefits for food manufacturers and foodservice operators of all size and scale, ultimately helping to improve overall heart health in the US.

What’s the New News?

Q: What is the news we just heard on Bunge and heart healthy soybean oil?
A: The FDA approved Bunge’s petition to claim soybean oil as heart healthy because several human clinical studies showed soybean oil may reduce coronary heart disease risk and lower LDL-cholesterol when replacing saturated fat and not increasing calories.

Why Did Bunge Petition the FDA for the Claim?

Q: Why did Bunge decide to petition the FDA on “heart healthy” soybean oil?
A: As a leading soybean processor, Bunge is committed to enhancing the value of America’s most accessible oil. Based on a compelling set of human studies from top nutrition research teams showing that soybean oil could lower LDL cholesterol when replacing saturated fat, we proactively petitioned the FDA to permit the claim recognizing that enabling heart health communications for soybean oil would further enhance the attractiveness of this popular ingredient. We recognize that the well substantiated heart health benefits of soybean oil would make this domestic food even more attractive to food manufacturers, foodservice operators, and, ultimately, consumers seeking out healthier food options. It will also help our farmer customers by supporting demand for soybeans.

How big is the U.S. Heart Health Opportunity for Food Manufacturers?

Q: How big is the U.S. heart health opportunity for food manufacturers?
A: Today in the U.S., 71 million adults have high LDL cholesterol and 15.5 million have coronary heart disease (American Heart Association). Heart health is the #1 health feature consumer look for when grocery shopping. Also, 30% of health conscience diners are looking for heart-healthy options, which is the #1 health feature they seek when dining out (Hartman Group).
Why is Soybean Oil Heart Healthy?

Q: Why is soybean oil heart healthy?
A: Eating soybean oil in place of butter, animal fats, and oils higher in saturated fat is heart healthy and may reduce the risk for coronary heart disease for two reasons:
- First, it may lower LDL cholesterol, which is a risk factor for coronary heart disease.
- Second, it provides polyunsaturated fats—both omega-6 and omega-3. The current U.S. Dietary Guidelines states “that strong and consistent evidence shows that replacing saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease events (i.e. heart attacks) and cardiovascular disease-related deaths.”
  - Soybean oil contains 58% polyunsaturated fat—52% omega-6, 6% as omega-3
  - Of the most commonly consumed oils in the U.S., soybean oil is the richest in polyunsaturated fat (when compared with canola, corn, olive, and palm oils).
  - It is also the primary ingredient source of dietary total polyunsaturated fat and polyunsaturated omega-3 in the U.S.

Q: What is the science behind the claim?
A: FDA based the claim on the evidence that eating soybean oil in place of saturated fat may lower LDL cholesterol. This evidence comes primarily from six publications of well-controlled human randomized soybean oil clinical trials and one observational study. The majority of these trials showed a significant reduction in LDL cholesterol when soybean oil replaced saturated fat.

How Can Food Manufacturers Use the Claim?

Q: What does the FDA’s approval of Bunge’s petition on heart healthy soybean oil mean for food manufacturers?
A: Food products or menu items containing at least 5.0 grams of soybean oil per reference amount customarily consumed (RACC) and per labeled serving can use the new claim if they also meet the following criteria set by the FDA:

For 100% soybean oil, soybean oil blends and soybean oil-containing shortenings:
- Total fat: No restriction
- Saturated fat: 4 grams or less per RACC and labeled serving size
- Trans fat: No more than 1 gram per RACC
- Cholesterol: 20 mg or less per RACC and labeled serving size (must meet the definition of “low cholesterol”)
- Sodium: 480 mg or less per RACC, labeled serving size and 50 grams if the RACC is 30 g or less or 2 T or less

Soybean-oil containing dressings for salads can also qualify for the claim by meeting the above criteria, but they must also have no more than 4 grams saturated fat per 50 grams.
Margarine, margarine substitutes, and other margarine-like products and vegetable oil spreads can also qualify for the claim by meeting the above criteria, but they must also be a good source (i.e., contain 10% or more of the Daily Value) of 1 of 6 nutrients as specified in FDA’s general health claim regulations.

All other soybean oil-containing products can qualify for the claim if they contain:

- Saturated fat: 4 grams or less per RACC, labeled serving size and per 50 grams if the RACC is 30 g or less or 2 T or less
- Trans fat: No more than 1 gram per RACC
- Cholesterol: 20 mg or less per RACC and labeled serving size (must meet the definition of “low cholesterol”)  
- Sodium: 480 mg or less per RACC, labeled serving size and 50 grams if the RACC is 30 g or less or 2 T or less
- Beneficial nutrient (naturally occurring): A good source (i.e., contain 10% or more of the Daily Value) of 1 of 6 nutrients as specified in FDA’s general health claim regulations.

Items meeting these guidelines can claim “heart healthy”, “may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease”, and “may reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol”, and can use heart shaped vignettes. However one of the following FDA-approved claims must be provided close to the headline claim in reasonable size font:

**Supportive but not conclusive scientific evidence suggests that eating about 1½ tablespoons (20.5 grams) daily of soybean oil, which contains unsaturated fat, may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. To achieve this possible benefit, soybean oil is to replace saturated fat and not increase the total number of calories you eat in a day. One serving of this product contains [x] grams of soybean oil.**

**OR**

**Supportive but not conclusive scientific evidence suggests that eating about 1½ tablespoons (20.5 grams) daily of soybean oil, which contains unsaturated fat, may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. To achieve this possible benefit, soybean oil is not to increase the amount of saturated fat in the diet or the total number of calories you eat in a day. One serving of this product contains [x] grams of soybean oil.**

**Q: What food categories are most likely to benefit from this claim?**
A: The claim can be made on food products across many categories where soybean oil is commonly used, including bottled oils, salad dressings, snacks, crackers, bakery, ready/frozen meals, sauces, margarine/spreads, and shortenings, etc.

**Q: Does the heart health claim apply to all types of soybean oil?**
A: The heart health claim applies to all traditional unmodified soybean oil, whether from GMO, non-GMO, or organic seeds; solvent extracted or expeller pressed; conventionally or physically refined.
Q: Does the heart health claim apply to high-oleic soybean oil?
The claim does not apply to high-oleic soybean oil, which has a different fatty acid profile.

**Soybean Oil Facts & Bunge Soybean Oil Facts**

Q: How important is soybean oil in the U.S. diet?
Based on USDA data, soybean oil is the most commonly used oil in U.S. food processing and foodservice. As far as total domestic oil and fat consumption is concerned, soybean oil is first, followed by canola, palm, corn, butter and olive oils. Based on USDA and FAO data, soybean oil is the primary food source (primarily as an ingredient) of polyunsaturated fat, especially polyunsaturated omega-3.

Q: How important is Bunge as a soybean processor?
Bunge is the world’s largest processor of soybeans and the second largest processor of soybeans in the U.S.

Q. Bunge is also a leading supplier of canola oil. Do you expect this soy oil claim to take market share from your canola business?
There are a number of factors, beyond just health, that determine why customers and consumers will choose an oil. With both soybean and canola oils having heart health claims, we can offer even more heart health options to customers.