

Canola digest.



Canola oil is turning up everywhere

A picture is worth a thousand words and this picture says canola oil is turning up in some very familiar places.

If you check food labels of products in which a vegetable oil is used as an ingredient, there's a good chance you'll see canola oil listed, particularly on labels for American products. That's a result of both US labelling regulations and consumer awareness.

"The two are interrelated," explains Dwight More, president of the Canola Council. "It is a requirement that the specific oils or fats in products whose predominant ingredient is an oil or fat be listed on the label. So American consumers are familiar with seeing the specific oils in their salad or cooking oils and shortenings identified on product labels. This in turn has made them much more aware of the types of oils and fats in their diet. As a result, food manufacturers

are more inclined to specify on their labels the source of the fat in their products."

"Certainly when it comes to canola oil, food manufacturers are interested in capitalizing on the recognized health benefits associated with canola."

In Canada, there is no requirement yet to list on labels the specific vegetable oil(s) in a food product.

Larry Horn, senior vice-president with CanAmera Foods, heads up his company's refined oil marketing initiative into the United States. He's seen some exciting things develop south of the 49th parallel.

"Of course, after the introduction into the US of the first canola salad oil by Procter & Gamble with its Puritan brand, the competition followed suit," said Mr. Horn.

"Now we're seeing restaurants come on board. I've seen a number of restaurants in the United States with table cards or (wall) banners that say, 'We cook

with canola oil.' That's to address the public's interest in healthy food choices."

A growing trend, according to Mr. Horn, is the introduction of salad/cooking oil blends by several major food manufacturers. A blended product uses canola oil, because of its lower saturated fat content, along with one or more other vegetable oils.

But the development which has really caught Mr. Horn's attention is the recent introduction of a nationally branded margarine containing canola oil.

"That's a really big breakthrough because canola oil has not been used in margarine in the United States to any great degree. If it goes, this margarine thing has the potential of being really big."

The brand to which Mr. Horn is referring is Nabisco's *Fleischmann's Today's Choice*. Director of Commodities for Nabisco, Jack Bienkowski,

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serving the canola
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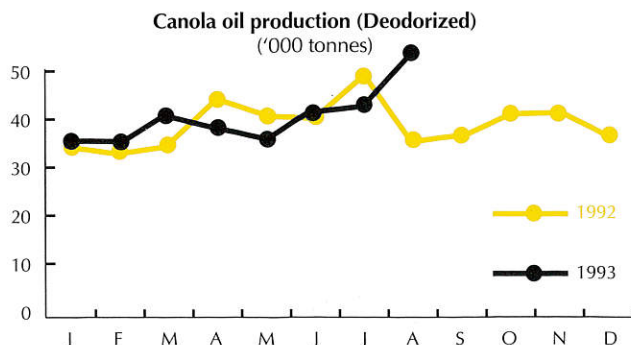
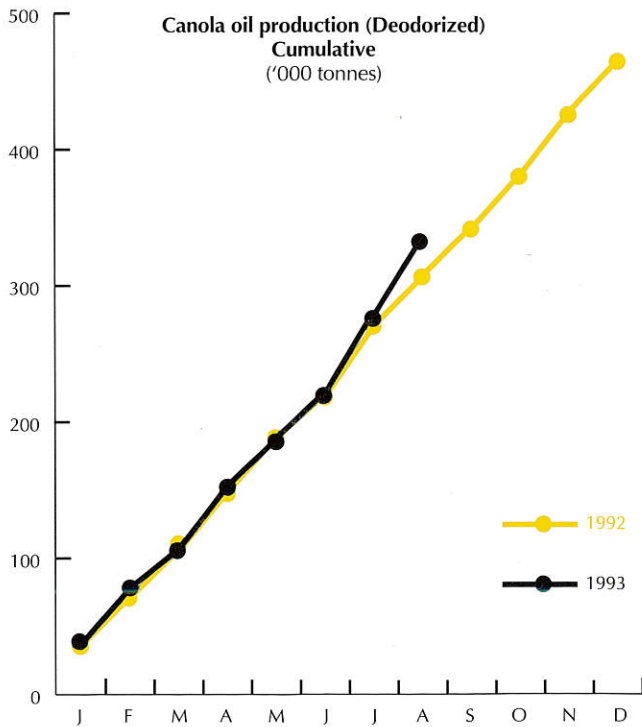
Statistics

Deodorized oil production — July/August

Statistics Canada data on current production are as follows: (All figures in tonnes. An "x" means confidential while a dash (-) means nil or not applicable.)

Source	Margarine Oil		Shortening Oil		Salad Oil		July Total	August Total	Year-to-date Total	% share of all veg. oils	
	July	August	July	August	July	August				1993	1992
Canola	4,611	6,115	14,382	15,687	23,781	31,835	42,774	53,637	328,114r	65.4	65.4
Soybean	5,226	5,824	x	x	x	x	13,563	18,084	128,287	25.6	24.5
Corn	209	290	38	36	378	348	626	674	7,889	1.6	2.2
Palm	191	224	662	877	-	-	863	1,101	7,477	1.5	1.6
Sunflower	393	353	x	x	x	x	1,349	1,224	11,536	2.3	2.7
Coconut	-	-	848	1,110	-	-	848	1,110	7,194	1.4	1.6
Peanut	-	-	268	266	9	46	277	312	2,340	0.5	0.4
Others	197	213	930	1,070	-	-	1,127	1,283	8,760	1.7	1.5
Total											
Veg. oils	10,827	13,019	23,625	25,796	26,964	38,610	61,416	77,425	501,597r		
Animal oil	7	-	2,443	2,239	-	-	2,450	2,239	25,097r		
Total											
All oils	10,834	13,019	26,068	28,035	26,964	38,610	63,866	79,664	526,694r		

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says so far consumer acceptance has been good but the product is still too new to assess what retailers' reorder pattern will be. Today's Choice was introduced regionally in the past year and went national in the late summer.

"It's a combination of canola oil and corn oil; about 70 percent is canola oil. (We went with canola oil) mainly because of the lower saturated fat. We are always looking to reduce the saturated fat in all our products wherever we can," Mr. Bienkowski said.

Kraft Foods is also test marketing a margarine containing canola oil in selected areas in the United States.

Another potential market for canola oil is in snack foods. While some name brand manufacturers are already using canola oil, Mr. Horn expects there will be even greater interest when specialty oils with improved processing stability and extended shelf life, like low linolenic canola oil, are more widely available.

The interest in canola oil in the United States is not waning. After attending a recent meeting of the US Canola Association, Mr. Horn said that there "still is much excitement about canola oil

and in developing the crop in the United States".

In Canada, canola oil continues to be the leading oil in food products even though it's profile is much lower.

"There's a lot of interest in canola in the rest of the world but it's the best kept secret here," said Mr. Horn. "I don't think most Canadians know about its healthful aspects."

In an effort to raise Canadian consciousness about canola oil, which is used in just about all the products in which a vegetable oil can be used in Canada, the market development committee of the Canola Council is launching a logo support program to encourage major food manufacturers to use the canola flower logo on food packages in which canola oil is the vegetable oil ingredient.

"The logo is already in use by a few companies on a regional basis — Safeway's Empress brand, Canbra Foods' West brand and Co-op's Harmoni brand," said François Catellier, market development co-ordinator.

"By working with food manufacturers, we hope to see widespread use of our logo. We want to make canola a household name in Canada."