



Breaking News on Industrial Baking & Snacks

High fructan barley holds wholegrain promise, says CSIRO

By Kacey Culliney, 16-Apr-2013

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A barley variety high in fructans and positively linked to improved gut health holds promise for wholegrain foods, according to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO).

The high fructan barley grain has been developed by Australian researchers at the country's science research institute CSIRO following five years of research.

The newly developed ingredient can be used in wholegrain flour or as flakes in a wide range of products including bread, cakes, crackers, health bars, breakfast cereals and cookies.

Dr Tony Bird, from CSIRO's Food Futures Flagship program, used preclinical rat studies to research the potential health benefits of the high fructan barley.

"The fructan content isolated and extracted from barley was found to improve a range of indicators of gut health, including promoting the growth of 'good' bacteria in the gut of experimental rats," said Bird.

"We also found that consumption of the fructan promotes retention of essential minerals, particularly calcium and magnesium and may be of benefit in promoting bone health."

Wholegrain and beyond

The barley grain contains up to 11g of fructans per 100g compared to traditional barley that has less than 1g/100g of grain.

This new ingredient provides the already recognized benefits of whole grains, combined with the further benefits offered by enhanced levels of fructans, Bird said.

"The CSIRO developed high fructan barley provides food producers the opportunity to deliver wholegrain food with greater potential health benefits provided by one natural ingredient," the research institute said.

Industry opportunities

CSIRO said the ingredient's physiological properties and potential health benefits are comparable to leading commercial products.

"Currently available commercial fructans are most commonly available as industrial extracts from chicory roots and included in foods as an additional ingredient. The high fructan barley developed by CSIRO allows food and beverage manufacturers to provide their consumers with the benefits of fructans in a more natural single package."

The research institute is looking to commercialize the grain.

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