

Health Canada approves claim for food products containing barley fibre

CALGARY, ALBERTA (Marketwire - July 12, 2012) -- Barley is finally getting the recognition it deserves. Years of research and documentation paid off this week when Health Canada approved a health claim linking the consumption of barley beta-glucan, a type of soluble fibre, to reduced blood cholesterol.

"This is a success story for barley," said Alberta Barley Commission Chairman Matt Sawyer. "This health claim has the potential to increase consumer demand for barley food products and, in turn, help grow our industry."

The announcement was made at the Calgary Stampede, which showcases international innovations in agriculture.

The health claim-which is the result of years of scientific work, including that of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) scientist Dr. Nancy Ames' team in Winnipeg, MB-will apply to suitable foods that contain at least one gram of beta-glucan from barley grain products per serving. One gram equals 35 per cent of the recommended daily intake.

The claim is based on evidence that shows consumption of at least three grams of beta-glucan per day helps reduce cholesterol, which is a risk factor for heart disease.

"It's official," said Dr. Ames. "Health Canada's acceptance of science that substantiates the claim means that we can communicate specific health benefits of eating foods that contain barley beta-glucan. It gives credibility to barley as a health food and also provides the necessary information in a regulated way that Canadians can have confidence in."

The health claim includes dehulled or hullless barley, pearl barley, barley flakes, grits, meal, flour and bran, as well as beta-glucan enriched milling fractions. Extracted barley beta-glucan is excluded from the claim.

"I'm excited about the potential for growth in the food barley industry," said Jim Hugo, a barley farmer near Three Hills, AB and owner of JRK Farms-a producer of barley flour and other barley mixes. "We've known for a long time that barley is a healthy option and it's great that we now have a health claim that proves it."

To learn more, visit Health Canada's website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.