

Visiting Hours

The Skinny On Coconut, Palm Oils

BY SARA GERMAN, RD, RN
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Google "health benefits of coconut oil," and you'll get more than seven million results. It has recently been championed by Dr. Oz as "a heart-healthy food that can keep your body running smoother."

According to his website, coconut oil assists with weight loss, moderates blood sugars, manages cholesterol, and helps with aging.

It's not the only tropical oil getting positive press: Dr. Oz recently championed red palm fruit oil as one of the top miracle foods of 2013, reporting that it helps you live longer, fights belly fat and heart disease, and even reduces your risk of Alzheimer's disease. At \$14 jar, it's certainly one of the more pricey options out there, but is it worth the expense?

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

While coconut and palm fruit oil have some vocal supporters, many

health organizations urge caution. Unlike other plant fats, tropical oils are high in saturated fat, the same kind of fat found in animal products like butter, the skin on poultry and the fat around your t-bone steak. Coconut oil is much higher in saturated fat than butter, while palm fruit oil has just about as much. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends limiting foods high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol, and replacing saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as olive oil and canola oil, to help improve blood cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease. But proponents of tropical oils maintain that their unique properties mean they should not be lumped into the same category as animal fats. What does the research say?

SEARCHING FOR EVIDENCE

It's true that the saturated fat in coconut and palm fruit oils is not exactly the same as the saturated

fat found in animal products. Fats come in different sizes — short, medium and long — and tropical oils have more of the "medium" kind. This means they are processed differently in the body. Additionally, red palm oil contains a form of vitamin A, an important nutrient that is missing from the diet of many people around the world. One thing to note: palm kernel oil is not the same as palm fruit oil — it contains much more saturated fat, and has questionable health effects.

Although these differences exist, how important they are is still unknown. Some studies suggest that the kind of saturated fat found in coconut and palm fruit oil may not raise LDL (or "bad") cholesterol levels like the saturated fat found in animal products does. On the other hand, tropical oils don't appear to lower LDL cholesterol as much as other plants fats do; studies are conflicting. In countries where coconut oil and palm fruit oil are produced, many people

have a high intake of tropical oils, without necessarily having an increased risk of heart disease.

Red palm fruit oil may have anti-inflammatory properties. It has been used successfully to combat vitamin A deficiency in several countries, but this is typically not a problem in the United States. Coconut oil could possibly assist with weight loss. Effects on Alzheimer's, immune function, and a host of other medical conditions have not been adequately researched. Unfortunately, most of the available are studies 1) short and small (results may not apply long term or with most people), 2) conducted on rats (obviously not the same as people), or 3) observational (which can't be used to prove anything). The bottom line: there is still a lot of research to be done.

A REGISTERED DIETITIAN'S TAKE

The jury is still out on coconut and palm fruit oils. Emerging evidence seems to indicate that they

might not be that bad for you — there could even be a few health benefits, and they are probably better for you than, say, butter or stick margarine. However, these are absolutely not miracle foods. Incorporating these oils into your diet won't harm you, but it also won't make you lose ten pounds in a month or ensure you live past one hundred. Other oils, specifically olive oil and canola oil, have a lot more research backing their health benefits. If you are looking for ways to lower your cholesterol, very good evidence shows that replacing equal amounts of saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat (found in nuts, avocados, and vegetable oils other than tropical oils) will help do this.

How does this play out in my personal baking? Depending on what I'm making, I choose my fats preferentially like this: olive oil > canola oil > coconut oil > butter. I don't use tube margarine, but if I did it would go between canola oil and coconut oil.

Area Students Receive 'Brighter Tomorrow' Scholarships

HURON — Anna Chicoine of Elk Point, Brooke Schwasinger of Vermillion, and Abigail Mitchell and Whitney Specht both of Yankton have each been selected to receive \$1,000 scholarships from the South Dakota Farmers Union Foundation. They are among the 26 recent high school graduates to receive the \$1,000 scholarships.

Chicoine, a graduate of Elk Point-Jefferson High School, is the daughter of Brian and Terri Chicoine. She plans to attend South Dakota State University this fall. Schwasinger graduated from Vermillion High School this spring and plans to attend South Dakota State University. She's the daughter of Tim and Patty Schwasinger. Abigail Mitchell and Whitney Specht are both graduates of Yankton High School. Mitchell is the daughter of Dan and Laura Mitchell and plans to attend the University of South Dakota. Specht plans to attend South Dakota State and is the daughter of Chris and Stephanie Specht.

For the sixth straight year, the South Dakota Farmers Union Foundation, in cooperation with Farmers Union Insurance Agency, are giving out thousands of dollars in total scholarships through the "Insuring a Brighter Tomorrow" scholarship program. The



Anna Chicoine



Abigail Mitchell



Brooke Schwasinger



Whitney Specht

26 high school graduates from across South Dakota will share \$26,000 in scholarships to be used to further their education at a South Dakota post-secondary school. Over the past six years, the Foundation has awarded over \$150,000 in scholarships to students attending South Dakota post-secondary schools.

"We're investing in our future by helping young people fulfill their dreams," said Foundation Executive Director Leslie Rupiper Morrow. "Each

year we get incredible applicants, and it's so difficult to decide the recipients. This year's scholarship winners are some of the best students in the state and we're confident that they'll be the leaders of tomorrow. We're excited to honor this great group and couldn't be more excited that they've chosen to stay in South Dakota to further their education."

The recipients were chosen from among a large pool of applicants. They were scored based on a combination of

academic record, activities and awards, financial need, and an essay relating to how they will, "Insure a Brighter Tomorrow," in South Dakota. Farmers Union Insurance agents throughout the state fund this scholarship program administered by the Farmers Union Foundation.

"Our insurance agents are committed to building a brighter future in South Dakota," said Wayne Bartscher, Regional Manager of Farmers Union Insurance Agency. "We're committed to

giving back to our communities, and this is a way we can help shape the lives of future leaders and build our state for tomorrow."

Area list of recipients:
Anna Chicoine - Elk Point - Elk Point Jefferson High School
Abigail Mitchell - Yankton - Yankton High School
Brooke Schwasinger - Vermillion - Vermillion High School
Whitney Specht - Yankton - Yankton High School

Are Farmers Really The Biggest Risk Takers?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

When I attended the International Society of Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) conference in Sandusky, Ohio last month, it was made abundantly clear by several invited presenters that farmers are prone to taking risks with their farm operations, investments, health and general well-being.

Viewing the premiere of the 90-minute Iowa Public Television (IPTV) documentary on the Farm Crisis of the 1980s confirmed the impression that farmers take substantial risks, sometimes when they shouldn't. The program was broadcast on IPTV on July 1.

Land prices rose in the 1970s when producers were encouraged to plant fencerow to fencerow by Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz. Farmers made profits at first.

Many purchased more land and larger equipment during the latter '70s and early '80s. Exports of grain soared when Russia made large purchases. Commodity and land prices ballooned.

Commodity prices fell after President Carter embargoed grain sales to Russia in 1980 to protest Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. The subsequent Reagan era ushered in a period when the Federal Reserve allowed interest rates to rise, with some lenders charging up to 21% for marginalized borrowers.

Many farmers couldn't make their payments. In two years Midwestern farmland prices plummeted to half their earlier peak.

Why do farmers take risks? Presenters at the ISASH meeting indicated many farm youths, especially males, think it's cool when a person they admire takes chances and escapes injury. So what if their hero tempts a mean bull in a rodeo or races an ATV on dirt roads without a helmet!

A psychological explanation



Dr. Mike ROSMANN

to do daring things too and reap similar esteem from observers.

Psychological trait research suggests farmers are among the greatest risk-takers. Psychological traits are those that exhibit consistent behavior tendencies.

Taking risks, along with high tolerance for adversity, self-reliance, capacity for hard work and perseverance, are traits that are linked with success in farming, according to studies of Australian and Scottish farmers. Taking risks is more characteristic of farming than many other occupations.

Genetic research indicates taking risks is encoded in some people's genes, especially farmers. Dr. Dan Eisenberg, an anthropologist at Northwestern University, studied Kenyan nomads who herded livestock and who recently had settled into villages in their country.

In his 2008 study Eisenberg

found nomadic farmers had a surprisingly high (one in five) rate of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is associated with a specific gene mutation.

ADHD, as is well known, is associated with a high activity level, reduced need for sleep, and a greater propensity for injuries than for non-ADHD persons, probably due to impulsiveness and risk-taking. Eisenberg speculated nomadic cattle herders with the ADHD gene were more alert for dangers to their livestock.

Eisenberg also examined Kenyan nomads who still herded cattle and goats. Those with the ADHD gene were better nourished than those without the gene. Perhaps the genetic mutation contributed to higher success raising livestock, thereby producing more available income and food.

Other researchers reported investigation results to Eisenberg's findings, giving rise to the speculation that many of us may carry remnants of the ADHD gene in our makeup, and even more likely for farmers. If we look at who constitutes North American farmers, we find many European and Asian ancestors who took the risk of emigrating from countries where they had little chance of owning land to find opportunities for farming their own land in a foreign location. That took courage and willingness to as-

sume risks.

The explanation is different for most Africans who were forced to come to North America to work as slaves. But the argument can be made that those who survived their harsh treatment aboard slave ships—and later on plantations, were probably better nourished and able to endure adversities. Perhaps the ADHD gene had a role in those who survived.

A May 2013 article in Psychology Today suggests persons with ADHD are better suited for life in open spaces with a variety of activities and hard work, such as are entailed in farming, than in cubicles with repetitive sedentary jobs.

Taken together, there is considerable evidence that farmers and ranchers today are high risk-takers. If anything, selection of the most successful agricultural producers across previous generations has probably concentrated risk-taking pro-

clivities in the agricultural population.

The IPTV program, The Farm Crisis, accurately tells the story of the 1980s' agricultural turmoil that reduced the number of Midwestern farm operations by one-third and it asks what, if anything, we learned from the crisis. See the program yourself for the answer.

The Farm Crisis takes a calculated look at government actions and agricultural producers to reach its conclusion. Perhaps ask your state public television station to contact IPTV for rights to show the documentary. IPTV says it will repeat the broadcast in Iowa.

Dr. Rosmann lives on a farm near Harlan, Iowa. He contributed to The Farm Crisis program, produced by Iowa farm resident, Laurel Burgmaier, for IPTV.

Sponsored by Lewis And Clark Behavioral Health

Quilt Show Set For Cedar County Fair

HARTINGTON, Neb. — A quilt show will be held at the Cedar County Fair in Hartington, Neb., on Saturday, July 20. This free show will take place in the air-conditioned Open Class Building and begin at 12:30 p.m.

Featured quilter will be Vi Colombe, a textile artist from Mission, who will share her original star-themed wall hangings and quilt designs.

For more information, contact Kristi Kruse at (402) 841-0833 or kristikruse@gmail.com, or visit cedarcountyfair.net/.

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