

## Heart-friendlier products from maize

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### Food Types - October 2003

Fourteen new corn lines developed by the US's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) could eventually help users of corn-based cooking oils and margarine to keep blood cholesterol levels in check, say scientists.

The new lines could also be used in salad dressings to extend their shelf lives, as well as in less costly animal feeds.

According to the scientists, some of their corn lines yield oils with 60-70% oleic acid, a compound that makes products stay fresh longer, and which has been linked to lower blood cholesterol levels.

Most commercially-available corn oils contain 20-30% oleic acid.

The scientists say high oleic acid content could also lead to margarine manufacturers omitting hydrogenation, a process that creates the much-criticised trans fatty acids that are believed to raise cholesterol.

According to the ARS, some of the oils from the newly-developed corn lines have total saturated fatty acid compositions as low as 6.5%, compared to the 13% found in corn oils currently available. Future research will focus on which types of products can use the high-oleic lines, and on crossing the new lines with existing corn varieties.