

Monsanto Wants the Omega-3 Fatty Acids Market

What's the next phase in omega-3 fatty acid supplementation? If biotechnology and agricultural trading giants like Monsanto, Dow Chemical, and Cargill have anything to say about it, the future is soy and canola.

There is no way to meet the demand we currently have for fish oil. Peru, the world's leader in fish oil and fish meal production, had a banner year in 2016, getting the highest recorded average price per metric ton. But those record numbers come at a time when production levels have declined 61% from the previous year. The production levels aren't likely to improve either, as the United Nations reports 90% of the world's fish are fully or partially overfished. Farm-raised fish are unlikely to be a good source of Omega-3s as they themselves are frequently fed other fish oils to boost their health. We are approaching the point where a big source for Omega-3s, wild-caught fish, will no longer be available, and farm raised fish currently require supplementation instead of providing it.

The Big Business Solution

The demand for fish oil products has created a 2.4 million dollar market, and many big companies have settled on grains as the solution to the problem left by dwindling fish oil supplies. One of the companies with ambitious plans in this area is Cargill, an agricultural trading company based in Minnesota. In a bid to create a fifth of current fish oil supplies, 159,000 metric tons, they've earmarked up to half a million acres of Montana farmland to grow their new strain of canola. Projected to be ready in 2020, the canola will contain long-chain omega-3 fatty acids from algae. Dow Chemicals has

also jumped on the canola train, although they plan to grow their canola in Canada.

Monsanto, on the other hand, is sticking with what they know – soy. Soybeans are already a source of ALA (alpha-linolenic acids), and the company's plan is to develop a soybean specifically meant to be processed into a soy oil for baked goods and soup. Other companies are launching omega-3 products with algae. Archer Daniels Midland in Chicago, a commodities trading and food processing company, created an algae-based product for fish supplementation. TerraVia Holdings Ltd is another company focused on algae, using it to convert sugar into omega-3s.

A Little People Solution

Omega 3 fatty acids are essential to any healthy diet, but other options are out there? Quality fish and fish oil are hard to find and hard to justify from an environmental perspective. Many of the proposed big businesses solutions focus on GMO crops. Both of these options are problematic.

Getting omega-3s in your diet doesn't have to be all about fish oil. Algae is a great source of omega-3s, and it's important to get different colors. Green algae like spirulina and chlorella, are a source of EPA. Brown algae like wakame and hijiki are sources of DHA, a key nutrient in supporting a healthy brain. Other vegetable based sources of omega-3s include flax, chia, and nuts, especially walnuts. The acids are also in a number of vegetables like spinach, winter squash, and brussels sprouts, though the amount is much less than what is found in seaweeds, nuts, and seeds.

The World is Not Enough

This is not the only important part of the food chain disappearing. Since the beginning of the twentieth century,

close to 75% of plant diversity has been lost. Six different livestock breeds are lost every month. Our gut bacteria has been slowly losing its variety, leaving us more open to disease. From a health viewpoint and an environmental viewpoint, now is the time to look for different, diverse foods. How long will it be before whole nutrients groups disappear from our world like so many plant varieties or members of our gut flora?

Related Reading:

- *The Fascinating Bacteria in our Gut, and How it Affects Our Whole Lives*
- *Scientists Against GMOs – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*
- *Understanding and Detoxifying Genetically Modified Foods*
- *Monsanto Company Profile*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*

Sources:

- *Grain Traders Prepping Fish Oil Substitutes for Aquaculture, Health Fads – Reuters*
- *Record Short First Fishmeal and Fish Oil Season in Peru Leads to a Five Year Production Low, Prices Declining Partially Due to Hardship of Companies – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*
- *Top 10 Foods Highest in Omega 3 Fatty Acids – HealthAliciousNess*
- *What is Happening to Agrobiodiversity? – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*