



The Naked Oat



Nutrition Stripped Down to its Bare Essentials

The innovative “naked” variety, or AC Gehl, is the first bald-seeded hulless oat to offer a wide range of benefits to producers, processors and consumers alike. Developed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), “the naked oat” represents a new class of hulless oat as the seed is almost free of surface-borne hairs.

This new variety is the result of more than 15 years of intensive research and breeding by AAFC scientists. This versatile, made-in-Canada crop is one example of how AAFC research has practical applications in bringing healthier, high-quality food to Canadians.

Nutritional Powerhouse

The successful breeding and development of naked oats has stimulated businesses to use the crop to develop new products for new markets. Naked oats are a nutritious alternative to rice in food products as they cook and taste like rice, yet offer a wider nutritional value. Naked oats have twice the protein, ten times the fibre and five times the iron of white rice. Additionally, naked oats have very high levels of lysine, an amino acid key to good muscle growth. It also has high levels of beta glucan, which can help reduce cholesterol, anti-oxidants and a low glycemic index.

Naked oats are a good alternative for gluten-free diets and companies are using naked oats to develop food products for celiac patients.

Benefits for producers and processors

Previously developed hulless varieties were still covered with fine hair (trichomes), which represented a major health challenge to growers and processors for harvesting, handling and processing of the grain.

The trichomes on regular varieties commonly break free during threshing and handling, enter the air and cause skin itching, respiratory congestion and eye irritation for operators. The trichomes also lock the seeds together and cause bridging in seeders and stoppages in the moving of seed in conveyance equipment. Trichomes also have an electrostatic charge that can attract fungal spores and dust, which can lead to infection on the seed.

Because of its bald condition, AC Gehl prevents bridging and it flows easily and reliably during the conditioning of the seed for sale or for food processing.

Unlike traditional oats, processing naked oats does not require expensive dehulling and sorting equipment, making it an attractive option for smaller businesses. They also pack more densely, which requires less storage space and lowers transportation costs.

Like all oat varieties, naked oats can be produced in any of the cereal-producing regions of Canada.