

Chinese consumers press their own cooking oil for fear of GM soybean oil

Back in 2010, it was the reports of “gutter oil” – restaurants cooking with recycled waste oil – that disgusted the public. More recently, scaremongering posts on Sina Weibo have wondered whether oil made from genetically modified (GM) soybeans could cause cross-species infection. According to a Beijing Youth Daily report, over 90 percent of China’s edible oil is made from GM soybeans. Given the unknowns about this ubiquitous foodstuff, some Beijingers have decided to play it safe by pressing their own cooking oil at home.

Yi Mu, 27, has been extracting oil at home since 2011. Nowadays, Yi and her family rarely cook with store-bought oil. “Since food safety is such a serious problem, we now only trust the oil we extract at home.”

An oil press tends to be pricier than other common kitchen appliances. A search for “oil press” on the e-commerce website taobao.com turns up thousands of results, with prices ranging from 680 yuan (\$110) to around 6,000 yuan. The most popular version sells for 1,780 yuan – 625 machines have been purchased in the past month.

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