


Genetically modified healthier foods: Will consumers accept Cargill's low-fat GMO canola oil?

Rich Fletcher spent 11 years tinkering with the genetics of the canola plant in pursuit of a single goal: Lowering the fat content of the oil it produces, one of the most widely used food additives in the world.

 He succeeded. His employer, Cargill Inc., will begin selling the new, healthier oil to food companies around the world as soon as [January 2018]. Thanks to Fletcher and his team of scientists, those companies will be able to sell healthier French fries, cookies and thousands of other food items.

But a lot of people will refuse to buy those products.

Cargill's breakthrough included altering the genetic code of the new canola plant to withstand weed killers that growers might use in their fields. That makes the oil it produces a genetically modified organism, or GMO, something a growing number of consumers fear and that governments in some parts of the world outlaw.

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Fletcher believes that consumers ultimately will accept the canola oil that he has devoted much of his professional life to developing.

"I think, in the end," Fletcher said, "we've created a healthier oil, and that will overcome any of the current public perception concerns."

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