

Mexico Spells Hospitality S-O-Y

Commodity : Soybean Oil, Soyfoods

Country/Region: Mexico

Funding Source: MAP

Program year : 2009

Several prestigious chefs and soy buyers traveled to Chicago to learn the many culinary uses for soy.

The chefs attended a seminar with Chef Christopher Koetke. Koetke, a dean at Kendall College, spoke on and demonstrated the benefits of cooking with soybean oil and soy products. The chefs also visited Bunge where they learned about soybean oil during a tour of the product development area of the plant. The chef team concluded with a seminar on using trans fat free U.S. processed soybean oil. Chefs and food service operators in Mexico have recently begun expressing great concern over the use of trans fats due to their negative health impact. The Mexican Senate is considering a partial ban on the use of trans fats in commercial food products thus training on trans fats and soy may become increasingly important in this market.

The impact of these chefs goes far beyond what they personally use in their own restaurants. The chefs selected act as industry leaders and innovators. Other chefs throughout the country look to them to determine the new trends in food. Persuading these chefs to include more soy in their recipes will influence Mexican food trends toward using more soybean oil. Following their experience, many chefs enthusiastically shared ideas for soy usage in their operations, at culinary festivals and in educational materials.

The hospitality industry provides Mexico with a substantial portion of its income. The area around Cancun alone boasts over 250 upscale hotels. With such a large and important sector of the economy potentially increasing soy usage, the U.S. has an opportunity to further increase exports to what is already the second largest market for U.S. soy.

Since the trip, participants have increased their use of soy.

- Victor Fabela, a corporate chef from Toks, changed all the oil at all his 54 outlets to soybean oil. These kitchens now use over 6,500 gallons of soybean oil every month.
- Guy Santoro, Executive Chef for Hoteles Presidente, has converted one of his six hotels to soybean oil usage. He indicates that he will soon switch all of his other operations
- Andres de Robina, Developing New Market Director of Arrachera House, directs 97 outlets that consume over \$110,000 worth of cooking oil per year. Following the trade mission, he began transitioning all of his outlets to soybean oil.



Caption: USB Farmer Director Sharon Covert (Ill.) helps the chefs create delicious soy based desserts during the trip.



The activities of the U.S. Soybean Export Council to expand international markets for U.S. soybeans and soy products are made possible by producer checkoff dollars invested by the United Soybean Board and various State Soybean Councils, support from cooperating industry, and through the American Soybean Association's investment of cost-share funding provided by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.