

QSSB Health and Nutrition Outreach

September 2025 Article

Soy Stars at the Center of Nutrition Trends

Written By U.S. Soy Staff Writer

Many of today's modern food and nutrition trends circle back to a few common goals: supporting long-term health, fueling active lifestyles, and choosing sustainable options. One of the foods that fits into all of these trends? Soy! From protein quality to healthy aging, soy protein and soybean oil are showing up as versatile solutions that meet the masses.

Prioritizing Protein

High-quality protein remains a major focus for consumers of all ages, and soy delivers a unique package. It is the only plant protein that carries a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized health claim, suggesting its ability to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.¹ Soy is also a complete protein, containing all nine essential amino acids in amounts the human body needs, and it also a source of folate, potassium, and fiber.²

Fats and Heart Health

Few nutrition topics spark more debate right now than seed oils. Social media is full of conflicting messages, but scientific research tells a clearer story. Soybean oil, the most widely used edible oil in the U.S., is predominantly polyunsaturated fats—including linolenic acid (LA), an essential omega-6 fatty acid. Soybean oil also provides the omega-3 fatty acid alpha linolenic acid and vitamin E. While some claims online suggest seed oils are harmful, decades of peer-reviewed research says otherwise. In fact, health organizations consistently recommend unsaturated oils, including soybean oil, as part of a balanced diet. The FDA has recognized soybean oil for its cardiovascular benefits through a qualified health claim: *Supportive but not conclusive scientific evidence suggests that eating about 1½ tablespoons (20.5 grams) daily of soybean oil, which contains unsaturated fat, may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. To achieve this possible benefit, soybean oil is to replace saturated fat and not increase the total number of calories you eat in a day.*³

Plant Focused Diets

Plant-forward diets are becoming mainstream, and grocery-shoppers are adding soy-based burgers, dairy alternatives, and beverages to their carts. While plant-based meat alternatives have been on the market for decades, there are conversations over the level of processing needed to create these products. But there's good news here—[recent studies](#) find that these versatile and accessible foods provide essential nutrition, and one serving of a plant-based meat alternative is a suitable addition to a healthful diet.⁴

Sustainability

U.S. Soy farmers focus on producing a premium crop while sustaining the health of their land. Since 1980, these farmers have reduced soil erosion by 34% and greenhouse gas emissions are down 43%. Land and energy use efficiency is also improving, with a reduction of 48% and 46%, respectively. Our farmers wake up each morning with the goal to provide high-quality soy protein and soybean oil in the most efficient way possible.⁵

Commented [KD1]: <https://sniglobal.org/scientists-advocate-for-nutrient-focused-evaluation-of-foods-deemed-ultra-processed/>

With the ever-evolving landscape of nutrition news and health research, soy continues to step up. Stay up-to-date with the latest research at [SNIGlobal.org](https://sniglobal.org).

References:

1. <https://www.soyconnection.com/old-pages/soy-information-health-professionals/soy-heart-health>
2. <https://www.soyconnection.com/soy-foods/soy-protein>
3. <https://sniglobal.org/soybean-oil/>
4. <https://sniglobal.org/scientists-advocate-for-nutrient-focused-evaluation-of-foods-deemed-ultra-processed/>
5. https://sniglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/USSOY-Sustainability-Compared-to-Other-Plant-Proteins_Oct-2022.pdf

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