

Hydrogenated fats and oils in frying applications

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Abstract

In Europe, hydrogenated fats and oils are successfully used for the preparation of fried food. The degree of hydrogenation depends on the base oil composition and technological requirements. Since about one century, hydrogenation is an excellent process to provide oxidative stability and extended functionality to naturally unstable vegetable oils at very economic costs. Modern frying shortenings are optimised in their composition in order to give the best balance between nutritional, technological and economical aspects. In most cases non-hydrogenated alternatives are much higher in their content of saturated fatty acids, like palm oil and its fractions. The ongoing *trans*-fatty acid discussion discriminates hydrogenated vegetable oils and fats versus butter and other *trans*-fatty acid sources and leads to a continuous increase of saturated fatty acid intake, which is debatable as well. Politicians have been blamed for not reacting quick enough when BSE appeared and are over reactive now with any new “food issue”, as the Danish “anti *trans*-fatty acid campaign” proves. The media may reflect, whether it is the right policy to scandalise almost everything straightaway and decision makers in the trade and the food industry are well advised to carefully balance available information.