

THE ORGANIC & NON-GMO REPORT

Information to ensure a safe, healthy, and sustainable food supply

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America's leading organic and non-GMO co-op

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NATURAL MARKETS

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Photo courtesy of Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and soybean checkoff

Expeller pressing equipment to make non-GMO and organic oils.

New trade group aims to support non-GMO and organic expeller pressed oil processors

Natural Oilseed Crushers Association advocates 100% natural processing of soybeans and oilseeds

With growing consumer demand for natural and non-GMO foods, a new trade group has emerged to raise awareness about the importance of naturally processed oils.

The Natural Oilseed Crushers Association (NOCA) was recently established “to promote the natural processing of

all non-GMO oilseeds, and to create awareness and transparency of all non-GMO food processing,” according to the

company’s website natural-crush.org.

NOCA president Mark Shuett says the new association



will focus on providing consumers with food oils that aren’t processed with harmful chemicals.

“When the consumer chooses a non-GMO food product, they trust that it is a natural food product,” said Schuett, who has owned an organic and non-GMO oilseed processing plant since 2000. “The big food companies are still using a hexane extraction process to chemically process oilseeds. Hexane is a carcinogenic, neuro-toxic chemical that has no business being in the supply chain of natural foods.”

“The problem is the American consumer has no knowledge of this,” Schuett said. “When the natural food consumer wakes up to this, they will demand a 100% natural process.”

The association’s base membership is comprised of natural oilseed processors who typically use conventional, expeller pressed crush methods to produce oil and meal. Soybeans comprise about 60 percent of the world’s oilseed crop output,

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with soybean oil being consumed daily by virtually every American in products like margarine, shortening, salad, and cooking oils. Soybean meal is the most important source of protein for poultry and livestock.

In order for poultry and livestock to qualify as “non-GMO certified,” the animals cannot consume genetically modified soybean meal. As more consumers are attracted to meats that are certified non-GMO, poultry and livestock producers have begun to raise non-GMO livestock. Unfortunately, most of the non-GMO soybean meal is processed through the hexane extraction process favored by the big food producers.

“This doesn’t make any sense to the farmers, to the livestock producers, or even the retailers, many of whom aren’t aware of this practice,” said Schuett. “But the real victims here are the natural food consumers who put their trust in our labels, and there are no labeling laws that speak to the hexane processing. This is an issue that threatens the credibility of the whole natural foods industry.”

While Schuett, who is the founder and president of American Natural Processors,

Inc., will serve as the president, NOCA has announced that Patrick Conners will have the day-to-day responsibility of managing the trade association as its executive director. Conners has spent the past 20 years in various marketing and strategic management positions in several industries.

“This is a compelling cause because on one side you have these small natural crush operators—most of whom are on the cutting edge of sustainable agricultural practices, and who fit perfectly into the natural food supply chain,” Conners said. “And on the other side you have ‘Big Food.’ Our objective is to bring transparency to the processing of oilseeds and give people a choice. We think that if the retailers and consumers understand the difference, they will choose a natural crush process.”

NOCA is filling a need by providing support to expeller pressed oil processors, which tend to be smaller companies.

“Our first objective is to build membership and put together an advocacy program,” Conners said.

For more information about the Natural Oilseed Crushers Association, go to naturalcrush.org. ■

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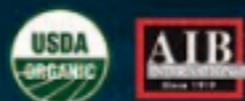
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