

Business Times

Green Ocean sets course for S. Korea

By Ooi Tee Ching
bt@nstp.com.my
2009/09/25

GREEN Ocean Corp Bhd, formerly known as Online One Bhd, is banking on the new Korea Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) nutrition guidelines, to push sales of its NoveLin cooking oil that doubles up as salad oil.

From next year, KFDA will tighten laws to promote healthy food manufacturing, lower sugar, sodium and trans fat in children's snacks.

In the last two decades, the prevalence of overweight children and adolescents has increased by 1.5 times. Experts, concerned that childhood obesity rate is faster there than in western countries, called for mandatory nutrition labelling.

Since July 2007, KFDA has required snacks, instant noodles and ready-to-eat meals to bear nutrition labels listing the amount of calories, carbohydrates, sugar, protein, total fats, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium.

South Korea's health authorities, also concerned about hazardous oxidised substances formed in repeatedly-used deepfry oils, are mandating fast food restaurants to switch to blends of higher smoke point.

At extreme deepfry heat of 180°C-200°C, harmful oxidised substance like "polar compounds" and trans fat start to accumulate in the oil.

If the oil is not changed with each frying batch, the toxic substance gets absorbed into fried food and eventually end up in our body system.

Long-term consumption of burnt oils can lead to stunted growth, irregular metabolism and reproductive complications.

Traditionally, South Korean fast food restaurants use soft oils like rice bran, sunflower, soya and canola.

"Restaurants using soft oils have to replenish the supply every two days to prevent burnt oil toxicity," said Green Ocean managing director Lee Byoung Jin.

"With NoveLin, however, restaurateurs can use the oil for three days before the next change," he told Business Times in an interview.

"We're introducing NoveLin, a healthier palm oil blend that has good oxidative stability compared



Lee (centre), Lipochem Sdn Bhd managing director Koh Pak Meng (right) and Dr Cheah at the Ace Edible Oil Sdn Bhd plant in Kapar, Klang, earlier this month.

with pure softails,” he said.

Also present at the interview was Lipochem Sdn Bhd research director Dr Cheah Kien Yoo. Lipochem is the process engineer that designed and built Green Ocean’s NoveLin plant in Klang, Selangor.

Cheah highlighted a 2001 review of 20-year dietary fat studies at University of Minnesota by scientists Grootveld, Silwood, Addis, Claxson, Serra and Viana, available on *Foodservice Res Int* 13 (1):41.

The American researchers concluded that polyunsaturated oils like soya, canola, sunflower and corn degrade easily to toxic compounds when heated up. Prolonged consumption of burnt oils lead to atherosclerosis, inflammatory joint disease and development of birth defects.

The scientists also questioned global health authorities’ wilful recommendation of large amounts of polyunsaturated fats into the human diet without accompanying measures to ensure the protection of these fatty acids against heat-and oxidative-degradation.

“NoveLin, being of palm oil and softails, has lower saturated fat content. Considering that this cooking oil blend is all natural, not genetically-modified and free from the deadly trans fat, we’re confident of helping fast food restaurants meet KFSA goals,” Lee said.

“We now have 500 fast food outlets testing NoveLin to make sure the food taste the same,” he said.

“Our first shipment was 100,000 litres. The second, of 200,000 litres, will leave for South Korea next month,” he added.

Formulated to meet World Health Organisation and American Heart Association recommendations, NoveLin is proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases because the blend is rich in antioxidants like omega-3 and -6 fatty acids and tocotrienols.

NoveLin also has an extra selling point over other salad oils.

“NoveLin is packed with supervitamin E, which the much-touted heart healthy olive oil does not possess,” Lee said. Tocotrienols or supervitamin E, can reduce cholesterol and has anti-cancer properties.

Green Ocean posted RM21.58 million revenue in the first quarter ended June 2009, a slight decrease from RM22.51 million a year ago.

The group’s ICT business continues to suffer from setbacks and this is reflected in the RM1.59 million loss, a further decline from the RM1.20 million loss a year ago. Lee also attributed the loss to amortisation of its palm kernel crushing plant.

Asked on the group’s outlook for the rest of the financial year, he remains hopeful of NoveLin export revenue to help Green Ocean to break even.