

# Sought After Sunflowers



**Growing market opportunities  
and strong buyer support**

Twisting their fiery heads towards the sun and worshipping its movement throughout the day, budding sunflowers soon grow into towering beauties. Not just a pretty flower, the sunflower is widely recognised for its important health benefits and is increasingly valued as oil, seed and meal.



# The Good Oil

Sunflower oil is produced from oil- type sunflower seeds, providing a light oil – both in taste and appearance – with more Vitamin E than any other vegetable oil. A combination of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, with low level saturated fat, chefs use sunflower oil across the globe thanks to its versatility, high performance, great flavour and, let's not forget, its health benefits.

Polyunsaturated sunflower oil is low in saturated fat and can help to lower blood cholesterol levels. It is a great source of linoleic acid (Omega 6), an essential fatty acid the body needs, but can't produce on its own, as well as a good source of Vitamin E.

Polyunsaturated sunflower oil is most commonly used as an ingredient in margarines, but is also excellent for grills, mayonnaise and salad dressings.

Monounsaturated or high oleic sunflower oil comes from sunflower plants that have been developed to produce higher levels of monounsaturated fats, making it lower in saturated fat than traditional sunflower oil. It has a neutral taste and offers a trans fat free choice as well as excellent stability without hydrogenation.

Monounsaturated sunflower oil is a premium choice, which is highly versatile for use in long life frying, sauces, dressings and marinades.



## Sowing the Seeds of Health

Comprised of beneficial polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, sunflower seeds are one of nature's most nutritious foods.

The Confection Sunflower produces seeds, which are usually black with white stripes. The harvested seed size will determine its end use – larger seeds go to the in- shell market, medium seeds are usually hulled for the kernel market while small seeds are used in bird seed mixes and pet food to give even our beloved pets the health benefits of the sunflower.

# Sunflower Oil in the Food Industry

Polyunsaturated sunflower oil is widely used to produce bottled oil and spreads, offering health conscious consumers a tasty and nutritious cooking ingredient.

International company, Unilever, advocates the benefits of sunflowers by using sunflower oil in the popular spread brand, Flora.

*Since the introduction of polyunsaturated spreads in the early 1960's, Unilever has been a strong supporter of Sunflower Oil, and in particular, Australian Sunflower Oil. We have built our business on the back of the polyunsaturated story, and Sunflower Oil has been a critical component in that story. Unilever also saw opportunity for high oleic sun in the early 90's, and worked to foster its growth and development with the launch of both spreads and oils based on mono- sun.*

*Despite the seasonal, climatic and market challenges that come and go with sunflower cultivation in Australia, we remain committed to this vital component of our business, and this vital component of the Australian agricultural landscape.*

*Nick Goddard  
Corporate Relations Director  
Unilever*



*Goodman Fielder sells Sunflower oil for the production of food products including salad dressings, margarines and also for use in frying applications. We use Sunflower oil because it is low in saturated fats and is a very healthy oil.*

*Our Sunola brand, which uses Hi-Oleic sunflower oil is an excellent oil for frying applications. It is low in saturated fats, has a clean taste, and has a longer frying life than standard oils. We see tremendous growth for Sunflower oil as consumers become more health conscious and look for healthy oil alternatives.*

*Paul Hitchcock  
Goodman Fielder*

Monounsaturated or high oleic sunflower oil is increasingly used in the frying industry, both in the consumer and foodservice markets, thanks to its recognised health benefits.

*Sunflower Oil is an important part of the raw material supply mix for Peerless Foods. It is used in several key products such as liquid oils for frying and culinary purposes, plus in retail spreads, both locally and overseas.*

*Sunflower Oil is our preferred raw material and finished products for two key reasons:*

- 1) The health benefits it delivers through high levels of polyunsaturated fats.*
- 2) The benefits provided in culinary usages through having a high smoke point and being a consistent and high performance frying oil with longer frying life than some other vegetable oils. This oil provides both a balance between health and performance.*

*We see the potential growth for Sunflower Oil continuing as long as the price premium remains constant with canola and cottonseed oils and the benefits continue with relation to the fatty acid make up and cooking benefits.*

*Daniel Jenshel  
Marketing and International Sales Manager  
Peerless Foods*

In addition, numerous snack food companies are now using pure sunflower oil in the production of potato chips, ensuring they are low in saturated fats and high in polyunsaturates, making them overall a healthier crisp.

Well known snack food company, Smith's, uses high oleic sunflower oil in the manufacture of some of its popular products. Their Red Rock Deli range is cooked exclusively in 100% high oleic sunflower oil, as well as some of their other delicious snacks.

*As part of our ongoing strategy to improve the healthfulness of our products, The Smith's Snackfood Company is investing in high oleic sunflower oil. High oleic sunflower oil is lower in saturated fat and higher in monounsaturated (good fats) compared with how potato chips have traditionally been cooked. All Red Rock Deli products are cooked in 100% high oleic sunflower oil and all Smith's chips are cooked in a blend of high oleic sunflower oil and palmolein oil.*

*Gerard Smith  
Marketing Director  
Smith's Snackfood Company*

# Sunflower Seeds in the Food Industry

Crispbreads, cakes, health food bars... these are just some of the products that confection sunflower seeds make their way into. Once seen as the snack of vegetarians and vegans, the sunflower seed is now a mainstream nibble thanks to their high protein and fibre levels, B vitamins and other important nutrients such as magnesium, potassium, zinc, iron and calcium.

Food manufacturers know the value of adding these tasty and nutritious seeds into the mix, helping to keep consumers satisfied and healthy.

Think about your morning muesli, favourite bakery breads and trail mix and you'll understand where sunflower seeds crop up in the most unexpected – but delicious – places. Adding a nutty crunch to the confectionery market, sunflower seeds deliver great flavour, texture and the all important health benefits to those special treats.

*Sunflower Oil provides one of the healthy oil options needed in a balanced diet. Strong demand exists for this versatile oil.*

*Robert Green  
General Manager  
Cargill Australia*



*The Sunflower has long been recognised as one of nature's best whole food sources of dietary fibre, vitamin E, folate and zinc. As a result of these great health benefits, we established Australia's only dedicated sunflower de-hulling plant to prepare the seeds for human consumption in confectionary applications.*

*From sunflower seeds for breakfast cereals, breads, snacks and bars, customers increasingly acknowledge sunflower seeds as a healthy, high energy and great tasting ingredient.*

*John Reardon  
Director  
Paradise Farms*



## Add Sunshine to Your Life

It's easy to add the benefits of sunflowers to your diet:

- Use monounsaturated sunflower oil for longer life frying as well as in sauces, dressings and marinades
- Use polyunsaturated sunflower oil for grilling and making your own mayonnaise and salad dressings
- Sprinkle a tablespoon of toasted sunflower seeds over a salad before serving
- Add sunflower seeds to stir fried vegetables or to cooked carrots and broccoli with a splash of sunflower oil
- Use seeds as a topping for homemade bread, cakes or muffins
- Mix with almonds, walnuts, sultanas and apricots with sunflower seeds for a quick, nutritious snack
- Make seeds into sunflower butter and use like peanut butter or tahini simply by blending seeds in a processor and adding sunflower oil to achieve a smooth consistency

# Sunflower Oil, Seeds and Meal in the Feed Industry

Not just great for humans, sunflower oil and seeds offer the same great health benefits to animals being a good source of energy and linoleic acid.

Sunflower seeds can be found in birdseed mixes, crushed into pig and poultry feed and fed to horses as an energy and coat gloss supplement.



*Deacon Seeds in Dalby, on the Darling Downs, is a major supplier of grey and black sunflowers to the bird seed and race horse feed industry throughout Australia and export markets. During the recent dry years, sunflowers have increased in demand as well as retaining higher values, and indications are these trends will remain.*

*Terry Deacon  
Director  
Deacon Seeds*

## Make a meal of it

It's not just in seed form that livestock can make the most of sunflowers but also through nutritious sunflower meal – a by- product of the oil removal process.

Australian sunflower meal provides protein, energy as well as digestible fibre. Sunflower meal is an excellent feed for all livestock. It can be used as a protein source and is highly palatable for horses and dairy and beef cattle. Both cattle and horses are able to use the oil and fibre as an energy source to compliment the protein. Sunflower meal can be included in pig and poultry diets as a protein and energy source.

*Sunflower seed, meal and oil are important ingredients used in animal feeds manufactured by Ridley AgriProducts.*

*Sunflower seed is included in feeds for horses, cattle, calf and some poultry as a source of energy (oil) and protein. Sunflower meal is included in compounded feeds for a wide range of animals and provides protein and some fibre. Sunflower oil can be used to provide energy as well as linoleic acid in poultry feeds, while it can also be used in a range of animal feed where energy is required.*

*Robert Parkes  
National Technical Manager  
Ridley AgriProducts*



*Omega Feeds is based on the sunflower, one of nature's most complete food sources. Omega Feeds combine the high fibre found in the hull of the sunflower seed, with the natural goodness of sunflower kernels and specially selected supplements. As a result, horse carers are finding our products deliver a cooling, calming source of energy for the animals. We've found the sunflower based feeds give horses the best and in return carers get the best from their horse.*

*Tim Reardon  
Director  
Omega Feeds*



# A Blooming Export Market

There is also a high export demand for Australian sunflower oil and seeds.

Australian oils and oilseeds have gained an excellent reputation with international buyers, given our efficient chain of production, processing and distribution.

The unique characteristics of sunflower oil and seeds are particularly appealing to the global food industry looking for products that meet the growing demand for healthy sunflower oil in cooking and dining.

Geographically and strategically, Australia is well placed to continue supplying the rapidly expanding export markets of Asia.

An agreed set of Australian standards for oilseed industry products ensures certainty to buyers of Australian seed, oil and meal, and is just one more component in our export success.

Itochu Australia exports high oleic sunflower oil for use by Fuji Oil (Singapore).

*High Oleic Sunflower Oil is a highly desirable product within the nutrition and confectionary industries. Itochu trades around 20,000mt of high oleic Sunflower Oil in the USA and Asian markets each year.*

*Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the health benefits derived from eating the correct forms of fats and our manufacturing customers are switching to use more high oleic Sunflower Oil as it is high in monounsaturated fat and lower in saturated fat.*

*We are confident that this trend will continue and therefore demand for high oleic Sunflower Oil will continue to increase in the future. Itochu have a major Australian crusher working for us to meet the strong demand in the world.*

*Hiromi Nagahata  
Manager Food Division  
Itochu Australia Ltd*

Opportunities for Australian sunflower oil exist in markets across the globe.

*High Oleic Sunflower Oil is a key ingredient for many of our customers and is used commercially as an ingredient for frying, salad dressings, dips, mayonnaises and cosmetics. High Oleic Sunflower Oil has a longer frying life and shelf life than most other oils and these properties are recognised by our customers.*

*Ian Mack  
Adams Australia*



# Why Grow Sunflowers?

Sunflowers offer growers many benefits, both in terms of market opportunities and agronomic advantages. Sunflowers are a highly sought after product with strong demand from a range of end uses providing growers with a choice of market options at attractive prices.

The strong gross margin for sunflowers compliments the crops' agronomic benefits including the fact sunflowers are highly suited to no- tillage, they improve the condition of the soil and are an effective break crop for diseases in winter cereals. The fact they may be sown in two planting windows allows flexibility in the farming system rotation and the ability to take advantage of early season planting before alternative summer crops are viable and again in the late season, sowing after other crop windows have closed.

## Sunflower Standards

An agreed set of Australian standards for sunflower seed and products ensures certainty to buyers of Australian sunflower seed, oil and meal. The industry body, Australian Oilseeds Federation (AOF) has developed a comprehensive set of Standards and Guidelines for the sunflower industry. This includes quality and technical standards together with the supporting methods of analysis. The trading standards and product specifications are available by contacting AOF via telephone: 61 2 9427 6999, fax: 61 2 9427 6888 or email: [aof@australianoilseeds.com](mailto:aof@australianoilseeds.com)

There are a number of buyers for sunflower seed that cover the uses outlined in this brochure. For assistance with buyer contacts, please contact the Australian Oilseeds Federation.



**Australian Oilseeds Federation**  
PO Box H236, Australia Square NSW 1225  
Tel **61 2 8007 7553** Fax **61 2 8007 7549**  
Web [www.australianoilseeds.com](http://www.australianoilseeds.com)