

보낸사람: "Gerald Moy"

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제목: Soybean - Storytelling

Dear Cherl-Ho,

A few days ago, I received in the mail from you a copy of "Soybean - Storytelling" (thank you) and today I finished reading it. Although I am busy right now, I could not help but reading this fascinating tale of how this important crop originated in proto-Korea and how it and its many products spread around the world. Perhaps you know the story of peanuts and how a single man, George Washington Carver, brought this modest tuber to the world's attention by demonstrating its versatility. But the soybean story is much older and its development is largely due to the ingenuity of the many unknown Korean people whose names are lost to antiquity. I might add here that they probably included a lot of women.

You certainly make the case that the original home of soybeans was around the Korean Peninsula. However, you only partial quote Diamond. His hypothesis was that we were all hunters-gathers until about 10,000 years ago. It was only a lucky few humans that had the necessary variety of flora and fauna available to them that allowed them settle and begin civilization. This means a source of energy (grains) plus a full complement of essential amino acids. So in Korea, rice and soybeans allowed these proto-Korean nomadic people the possibility to settle and build a civilization which included a unique cuisine rich in soy-based products.

I think Diane Evans did an excellent job in translating the book, but outside the translation, most Western readers are not familiar with the long histories of Korea, China and Japan. So a timeline showing the various dynasties and important soybean events would have been most welcome.

Outside of the book, I want to convey my story of soybeans, which occurred by coincidence a few days ago when I purchased my favorite brand of American peanut butter. The nutritional labeling informed me that there were no trans-fats in the product. Instead, the product contained "fully hydrogenated soybean oil" and other liquid oils to achieve the right consistency. This is not a problem intrinsic to soybean oil, which is a healthy oil, but when partial hydrogenation is used to raise the melting point, isomerization of the remaining cis double bonds occurs to give the more stable trans form. Trans-fats have been associated with adverse health effects and are no longer permitted in the US. However, partially hydrogenated soybean oil is still on the market here in Europe.

Obviously, fully hydrogenating soybean oil to a saturated fat solves this problem, but would have been a health concern a few years ago when the saturated fats were considered a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. This was in spite of the so-called "French paradox" because the French ate lots of saturated fats but had low rates of cardiovascular disease. This turns out not to be a paradox because saturated fats are not the cause of cardiovascular disease. It is sugar, but that is another story.

In conclusion, I would congratulate you, Ms Evans and the Committee for the Establishment of a Soybean Museum for this excellent initiate in making the history and utility of soybeans better known to the world at large. I think it can be the basis of a great presentation at the next IUFOST Congress in India. I look also forward to visiting the museum the next time I am in Korea.

Best regards,

Gerry