



August 8, 2007

Media Statement

WA CENTRE'S LUPIN BREAD COULD AID DIABESITY FIGHT

WA scientists have discovered that a new high-protein, low-carbohydrate loaf made from lupins could prove useful in the fight against "diabetes".

A team from the Centre for Food and Genomic Medicine (CFGM), based at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR), has found the locally-made lupin bread can help people reduce their meal sizes and curb hunger.

Study leader and University of Western Australia researcher Jonathan Hodgson said study volunteers who ate lupin bread consumed 25 to 30 per cent less energy during their meal.

"The study volunteers who ate lupin bread for breakfast not only cut their energy intake for that meal, they also consumed 15 to 20 per cent less energy for lunch and said they felt less hungry between breakfast and lunch," Dr Hodgson said.

"Because lupin kernel flour is high in protein and fibre with almost no carbohydrates, it may help to reduce a person's appetite and overall energy intake for the day, making it easier to control body weight.

"Obesity is a contributing factor for many serious health problems including type 2 diabetes and heart disease, so this bread could also be crucial in stemming growing health epidemics in our community."

The four week study involved 16 participants with a body mass index of more than 25 who were given lupin and regular white bread sandwiches for breakfast and lunch.

The bread, called Slimmer's Choice, was developed by Fremantle's Bodhi's Bakehouse in conjunction with UWA's School of Medicine.

"WA actually produces 80 per cent of the world's supply of Australian sweet lupins, so between that and our work at the Centre for Food and Genomic Medicine, we're well placed to help improve the health of our community," Dr Hodgson said.

"In October, we will begin a 12-month study to investigate the potential for lupin bread to help people lose weight and maintain a healthy weight after slimming down, as well as monitoring the effect it has on risk factors for heart disease."

The study hopes to recruit about 140 participants. For more information, please call (08) 9224 0344.

In 2006, the State Government pledged \$4.5 million over three years to the Centre through its Department of Industry and Resources.

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CFGM Director Professor Peter Leedman from WAIMR said as well as investigating food-based options, such as lupin kernel flour to deal with obesity and diabetes, scientists at the CFGM were looking to develop tests that could help in the diagnosis of diabetes and predict a person's risk of developing the condition or experiencing complications.

Other partners in the Centre are the CSIRO Plant Industry, the WA Department of Agriculture, Curtin and Murdoch universities, the WA Department of Health, the Telethon Institute for Child Health, the Lions Eye Institute and WA's five major teaching hospitals.

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**For more information please contact:
Natalie Papadopoulos, WAIMR Media Consultant on M: 0407 984 435**