

Consumers shifting to plant-based omega-3s

Market shifting from marine-based omega-3s

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Plant-based omega-3 production value is forecasted to grow twice as quickly as marine omega-3s during the next five years, according to a new analysis.

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While salmon in the seas across the world breathe a salty sigh of relief, chia plants quake in fear. Plant-based omega-3 production value is forecasted to grow twice as quickly as marine omega-3s during the next five years, according to a new analysis. The report, noted on naturalproductsinsider.com, was published by research company Amadee+Company.

Omega-3 products are worth more than \$4.5 billion at the producer level and almost \$32 billion in retail sales, according to the report. The company forecasts omega-3 production to grow more than 15 percent annually from 2013 to 2018.

Consumers are moving away from animal-based products and toward plant products that contain omega 3s, like flaxseed and chia seeds. The chia market remains small, but “continues to grow rapidly” though the crop will likely be scarce for the next three years as growers learn more of the crop. Apparently, knowledge gleaned during the 1970s about how to grow the plants into Scooby Doo and Jimmy Carter shapes is not terribly helpful.

Omega-3 fatty acids are thought to promote heart health, improve prenatal health, reduce inflammation, cognitive aging and developmental disorders. The most widely available marine sources of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) include cold water, oily fish, krill and algae.

The article concludes: “With the growing bevy of clinical support, omega-3 ingredients are holding steady as key players in the functional food marketplace.”