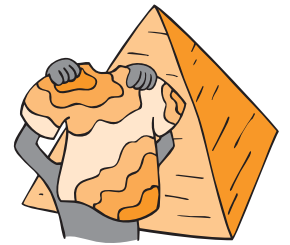


# Oilseeds Then and Now

**Soybeans** — The first record of soybeans is in the writings of Chinese Emperor Sheng-Nung in 2853 B.C. Soybeans arrived in America in 1804 from China, not as a food source but as ballast (extra weight in the bottom of the ship to make it more stable). In 1829 U.S. farmers began growing soybeans primarily to produce soy sauce. Around World War II, the soybean plant was grown as hay for livestock rather than for its beans. But soon scientists learned about the bean's nutritional and industrial properties. In the early 1900s, George Washington Carver developed more than 300 products from soybeans. Henry Ford even built the body of an entire car out of soybeans.



**Safflower** — The safflower is native to Persia and northwest India. By 1600 B.C., ancient Egyptians made fabric dyes from its dried flowers. Safflower is a relatively new crop in North Dakota, grown commercially since 1957, primarily in the drier western part of the state. Safflower provides oil for deep-frying foods, inedible oil that helps paints and varnishes dry and not turn yellow, meal for livestock feed and seed for birdseed.

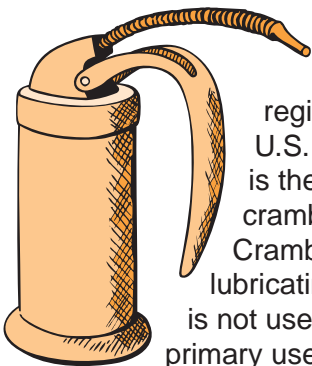


**Sunflowers** — It's believed sunflowers were cultivated by Native Americans in present-day Arizona and New Mexico about 3000 B.C. The name "sunflower" was given because the heads of the plants turned during the day to follow the sun to get more energy. Each morning the plants turned their heads toward the east, and by evening they were facing west. But that turning weakened the stems that hold the heads heavy with sunflower seeds so plant breeders developed plants that no longer turn but stay strong and upright.



Sunflowers come in two types. Striped seeds from non-oil sunflowers are eaten roasted in the shell or as kernels without the shell. Birds also love sunflower seeds. Black sunflower seeds are processed into oil for cooking and salads. North Dakota produces half of all the sunflowers grown in the U.S.

**Canola** — The oil from rapeseed, canola's "parent," was used in lamps in ancient Asia and Europe. It was used more after the development of steam power since it clung to metal surfaces washed with water or steam better than other lubricants. Today's canola is a relatively new plant, developed by Canadian plant breeders in 1974 for its nutritional qualities. The word comes from "Canada oil." In 1985, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved canola as a safe oil for human food. North Dakota produces more canola than any other state in the U.S.



**Crambe** — Crambe is native to the Mediterranean region and was introduced to the U.S. in the 1940s. North Dakota is the only state that grows crambe on a commercial scale. Crambe provides an industrial oil for lubricating and manufacturing and is not used as food. Crambe oil's primary use is as a very thin layer that prevents plastic bags from sticking together. Crambe meal is a good protein source for cattle.

**Flax** — Flax was cultivated in Babylon in 3000 B.C. Ancient Egyptians made fine linens from flax fiber. About 400 B.C., Hippocrates, the father of medicine, used flax to relieve abdominal pains. With World War II, demand for flax increased as more oil was needed in homes and factories. Today some people eat flaxseed in baked goods and eggs that are more nutritious since the laying hens were fed a special flaxseed diet. The linseed oil from flax is replacing some petroleum-based chemicals in paints, stains, flooring materials and other products.

