

OLé: A New Spanish Peanut High in Oleic Acid

PEGGY GREB (D3383-1)



Above is a new Spanish peanut variety (newly picked/raw) called OLé, developed by ARS scientists and collaborators. It is high in oleic acid, which makes its oil heart healthy for consumers.

A new Spanish peanut variety that packs high levels of healthful oleic acid has been released by Agricultural Research Service scientists and university cooperators. The new variety, called OLé, could provide producers and consumers with a peanut that has a longer shelf life and heart-healthy qualities.

ARS biologist Kelly Chamberlin, in the Wheat, Peanut, and Other Field Crops Research Unit in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and cooperators at Oklahoma State University developed OLé.

Oleic acid is a beneficial monounsaturated fatty acid, and the high oleic acid levels in the peanut make its oil a heart-healthy one for consumers. Growers like the new variety because of its disease resistance and potential for high yield and grade.

“This is an important variety that will have a lot of impact on the peanut industry as a whole,” says Chamberlin. Plus OLé has resistance to *Sclerotinia* blight, a fungal disease that can cause yield loss and is a particular problem for peanut growers in Oklahoma, Texas, and the Virginia-North Carolina region. Depending upon the severity of field infestation, yield losses due to such soilborne diseases may be as high as 50 percent.

Cultivated peanut is an economically important crop throughout the world. Peanut is susceptible to

many pathogens, with most damage being caused by fungi. Soilborne fungi cause diseases that adversely affect peanut health and productivity throughout the growing areas of the United States.

“Sustainable peanut production in the southwestern United States demands that cultivars grown there possess certain characteristics, including a high oleic/linoleic acid ratio, which increases peanut product shelf life, and resistance to multiple diseases,” says Chamberlin.

In tests at three locations in Oklahoma, Chamberlin and her colleagues found that growing OLé reduced *Sclerotinia* blight infestation. This can save growers approximately \$100 per acre in fungicide costs for *Sclerotinia* blight alone. The variety also has good resistance to pod rot.

“The first high-oleic Spanish cultivar released, called OLin, was the result of the collaborative efforts of ARS, Texas AgriLife Research, and Oklahoma State University. It was released in 2002,” says Chamberlin. OLé produces higher peanut yields than OLin.

The OLé variety is now being grown for foundation seed before being made available commercially.—By **Sharon Durham**, ARS.