

Grain sciences professor produces high-fiber snacks

By Emily Sterk
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A professor in the Department of Grain Sciences and Industry is in the process of making high-fiber snacks that offer a variety of health benefits.

Sajid Alavi, assistant professor of grain sciences and industry, is leading the project and said the snacks aim to lower cholesterol and blood pressure and reduce the risks of diabetes, heart disease and colon cancer.

"It goes back to 30 percent of Americans are clinically obese," he said. "Lots of fiber helps in reducing calories."

Alavi said he thinks the snack will attract health-conscious people, specifically consumers between the ages of 30 and 50 years old because they gain weight easily.

He said if adults eat the snacks, children might take notice and hopefully will eat the snacks as well.

He said the project relates to America because obesity is an issue.

"General obesity is such a problem—people talk about it," he said. "(A high-fiber snack) has so much potential to meet the demand, and people want to eat it."

Alavi said the project is challenging because it is hard to produce the color needed for the snack, which makes the dough difficult to produce.

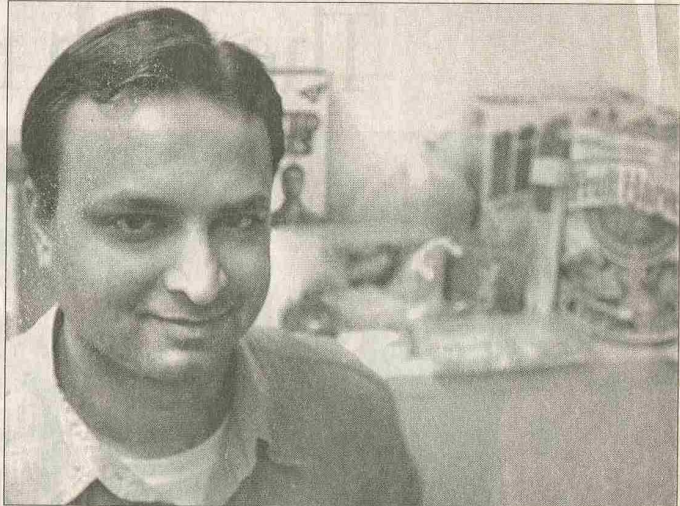
"It leads to poor-quality dough, and it does not give products like cereal that certain crunch," Alavi said.

Eric Maichel, extrusion operations manager for grain sciences and industry, helped Alavi with the project.

Maichel said he chose to be involved with making the snacks because he is interested in health appeal and how a product is made.

Marsha Boswell, public relations specialist for Kansas Wheat, said projects like Alavi's help find new ways to use wheat.

"One of the things that Kansas Wheat is looking for is new uses, and we gave (K-State) a chance to bring out value to wheat," she said.



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Sajid Alavi, engineer and assistant professor in grain science and industry, researches and teaches the science behind foods such as crispy snacks and pastas. Alavi is the leading researcher behind a snack that aims to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.