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Michigan's Corn Farmers Fund Technology Used in New Heinz Ketchup

DEWITT, MICH. – With the summer barbeque season quickly approaching, Michigan's corn farmers are urging consumers to incorporate corn into all of their barbeques, including in their ketchup.

The new Heinz® No Salt Added Tomato Ketchup includes a sodium-free salt substitute, called AlsoSalt®, which is made from corn. The product was developed at Michigan State University using research money from the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM), which is funded by the state's corn farmers. "We're excited to see a large company such as Heinz get behind and use a product that we helped fund the development of," said Jody Pollok-Newsom, CMPM executive director.

The CMPM funded the development of AlsoSalt in 1996 and the product received a patent in 1999. According to Kris Berglund, AlsoSalt's developer and Michigan State University Distinguished Professor of Forestry & Chemical Engineering, the 10 year timeframe between receiving a patent and the introduction of the new Heinz product is not unusual. "It takes time to successfully commercialize a product," he said.

AlsoSalt is made from lysine, which is fermented from cornstarch, and was developed to address the need for lower sodium in diets, but has the great taste of salt. The corn-based ingredients in AlsoSalt mask the undesirable aftertaste found in other salt substitutes. AlsoSalt looks and tastes like salt, while providing potassium and lysine, two important nutrients for good health.

"The CMPM, funded by the state's corn farmers, takes its mission of finding new uses and new markets for corn very seriously," said Clark Gerstacker, CMPM president. "As our crop size continues to increase, it is vital we continue to identify new uses."

Headquartered in DeWitt, the CMPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. The CMPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state's corn growers' political interests. For more information on the CMPM and the MCGA, visit the web site at www.micorn.org.

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