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New Research Presented at IFT Meeting Supports Eating Tomato Products for Heart Health

APTOS, Calif. (June 20, 2011) – New research findings supporting the heart health benefits of tomato products were presented at the International Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting and Expo held at New Orleans, Louisiana last week. The largest annual food science forum and exposition in the world, the IFT meeting drew thousands of food scientists, researchers, suppliers, media, government agencies, and others from around the globe. The IFT meeting provided insight into a number of pertinent topics on food health and innovation.

Britt Burton-Freeman, PhD, Director of the Center for Nutrition Research, Institute for Food Safety and Health, Illinois Institute of Technology, presented on the anti-inflammatory effects of plant foods at the IFT meeting on June 12, 2011. Burton-Freeman included results from her recent research, which introduced new data that continues to support a body of evidence linking tomato products such as canned tomatoes, tomato paste, tomato juice and ketchup with heart health. Burton-Freeman was the leader of a randomized, placebo-controlled trial sponsored by the Tomato Products Wellness Council, which found that tomato products significantly attenuate oxidative stress and associated inflammatory response in healthy weight men and women, with potential benefits on endothelial function. These benefits are linked with reduced risk of heart disease. The antioxidants and lycopene found in food sources of tomato products appear to be behind the reduction in oxidative stress and inflammation associated with consuming tomato products.

According to Burton-Freeman, addressing oxidative stress and inflammation is critical to disease risk reduction and health promotion. “Improved diets could reduce coronary heart disease and stroke risk by 20%,” she adds. The research presented at the IFT meeting builds upon a growing body of evidence linking tomato products—high in an arsenal of nutrients such as vitamin C, potassium, fiber and the antioxidant lycopene—with heart health.

“Including more tomato products in your diet is an easy, delicious way to help prevent heart disease. Foods such as canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, pasta sauce, tomato juice, tomato soup and salsa are popular, economical and so simple to include in your favorite dishes,” says Sharon Palmer, RD, a Los Angeles-based dietitian.

For more information on research, recipes, tips and insights, visit the Tomato Products Wellness Council at www.TomatoWellness.com

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If you would like additional information or would like to schedule an interview, please contact Rodger Wasson at (831) 661-0924 or rw@wassonideafarming.com.