

Howard Farmer See Health Benefits of Flax

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One tablespoon a day. The addition of that much ground flax could result in a multitude of benefits for a person.

Since John Wunder began growing flax, he has had numerous people regale the benefits they have noticed, including relief from constipation and arthritis pain. It has also helped to balance the blood sugar of a diabetic.

"That's why I got into this alternative, and that's why I'm raising flax," said the Howard area farmer.

Wunder had been growing about 5 acres of flax on his farm north of Howard up until a couple of years ago. That was when the farmer who had been renting his land retired. Wunder decided he would not only grow more flax but also try marketing and selling it.

Previously, Wunder had been giving away his product to friends and neighbors and later anyone else who found he grew flax.

"I was raising it and giving it away," said Wunder. "People started using it and seeing the benefits from it. Then more people found I had it and came and got it."

Wunder grew 70 acres of flax on his farm last year. This year, he grows 70 acres but also contracts with area farmers for another 70 acres.

Wunder's interest in flax began shortly after

he retired in 1993. The following year, his first wife was diagnosed with cancer. She died a year later in 1995, but throughout her health battle, Wunder and his wife had been researching alternative treatments.

"We had already been eating flax, but didn't really know what it did for us," he said. "Then she died in 1995, and in the meantime, I found a book that listed an alternative cure for cancer as linseed oil and cottage cheese."

Linseed oil is made from flax.

Since then, Wunder has discovered a multitude of benefits from incorporating flax into a diet.

"It lowers bad cholesterol and helps raise good cholesterol," Wunder said. "It makes blood slipperier and lowers blood pressure."



John Wunder and his second wife Virginia package the flax they raise near Howard into two-pound bags using this bagging machine that measures two pounds of grain for each bag. They have been married for seven years.

Studies in Canada have shown that adding flax to a person's diet can help with reduce tumors associated with hormone-related cancers like breast cancer.

"So why shouldn't every lady be using flax?" Wunder said. "They should just as a preventative. If they didn't do any more than that, why, it'll be one of the best preventatives you could have."

To get the best benefit from the grain, Wunder said, it should be ground fresh. Personally, he said, he grinds only enough to last him a week.

Today, Wunder's Golden Flax is sold locally in Rusty's Grocery in Howard, Jubilee Foods of Madison and the County Fair in Mitchell.

His product can be found statewide, however, from Rapid City to Rochester, Minn., from Watertown and Aberdeen to Yankton and Norfolk, Neb. The product is stored in an Affiliated Foods warehouse in Norfolk.

"It's fun -- a lot of fun. I just hope I live long enough to see it go," Wunder said.