

Previous page : [Quinoa - meat analogue of the future?](#)

## **Quinoa - meat analogue of the future?**

By Jess Halliday

**27/06/2007- Quinoa, dubbed the mother of all grains, is starting to put in an appearance as a meat analogue in vegetarian foods, with Israeli company Soglowek launching quinoa-based patties to the international market.**

The grain, which hails from South America and has a history of consumption by the Aztecs dating back 6000 years, is rich in protein, amino acids, fibre, phosphorous, magnesium, iron. It is also gluten-free. While awareness of the grain is growing, to date it has mainly been used as an ingredient in home cooking, or in cereal bars.

Israeli food company Soglowek has sought to exploit the healthy attributes in a new context by developing vegetarian patties that use quinoa as the main meat analogue, combined with soy protein and lentils.

Available in two variants - vegetable and pesto - the patties have been on the market in Israel for the last seven months, and exports to the US are just getting underway with a trial in the New York area with distributor Blue and White.

Soglowek is also starting to introduce the concept to its European customers. But given that this is a relatively new use for the grain the company expects that it may take some time to garner awareness.

Indeed, the company is claiming to be the first to develop quinoa-based patties. A search of Mintel's Global New Products Database (GNPD) confirmed that this is a very new area. Since 2003 only eight prepared food products containing quinoa as an ingredient showed up. Most of these were soups or vegetarian platters.

But in 2003 UK company Anglesey introduced a chilled quinoa meat substitute called Quinova, intended to be minced or diced and used as an ingredient in home cooking.

GNPD director David Jago told FoodNavigator.com that quinoa is such an unlikely meat substitute he could only really envisage it being used in products like veggie burgers.

*"Other than that, is only found in cereal bars and baked goods," he said.*

Rachel Wilson, senior technical advisor at Leatherhead Food International, was positive about the potential in more food categories:

*"There is already quite high awareness of quinoa," she said. "It could definitely be used*

*as a meat analogue."*

Wilson said that the main advantage in using quinoa in place of soy is on nutrition grounds, since it has a higher protein content (12 to 18 per cent), and a balanced set of amino acids similar to those found in dairy.

Indeed, Soglowek's decision to use quinoa was very much predicated on its healthy profile - even though it costs a little more than soy, Yinon Grinberg, senior food technologist for vegetarian products told Foodnavigator.com at the briefing at Soglowek's factory in Northern Israel.

Moreover, international marketing manager Naomi Omessi said: *"There is really an awareness of quinoa. It is very trendy right now, and hopefully that will last."*

Also there has been some debate in scientific circles over whether soy is good or bad for health, particularly in the field of reproductive health and menopause symptoms.

*"Quinoa takes you out of the debate and puts you on a healthy track."*

One potential barrier to using quinoa in formulations could be the tendency towards bitterness.

Quinoa seeds are coated with a bitter compound called saponin, which acts a natural deterrent to birds eating them. This coating is generally removed by soaking prior using quinoa as an ingredient in home cooked food.

In any case, according to Wilson, most quinoa sold commercially has already been processed to remove the coating.

Grinberg said that Soglowek has countered any remaining bitterness issues by using spices in the formulation.

Aside from the taste, Wilson said that the grain is *"quite easy to work with"*. Some investigations are underway to modify the structure of the grain into bigger pieces, giving it more texture.

The Israeli meat analogues sector is dominated by Tivoli, which holds a 70 per cent share. The exception is quorn, for which Soglowek holds the dominant 70 per cent share.

Other products in the meat analogues sector include soy and tofu-based products, and cereal and vegetable based products.

Soglowek is also active in meats and pastries.

**Copyright** - Unless otherwise stated all contents of this web site are © 2000/2007 – Decision News Media SAS – All Rights Reserved. For permission to reproduce any contents of this web site, please email our Syndication department: [contact our](#)

*[Syndication department](#). Full details for the use of materials on this site can be found in the [Terms & Conditions](#). [contact the editor](#)*

<http://www.meatprocess.com/news/printNewsBis.asp?id=77697>