

PULSES RECIPES IMPRESS AT TASTE TESTS

The air is thick with the smell of doughy goodness. The sunny tables, street-level in Red River College's culinary arts building cafeteria, filled with the noon-hour crowd. Contentment is everywhere.

"Mmmmmmm," says one man, taking a healthy bite of a delicious, golden perogy. His table-mates nod in agreement. "This is exactly what I need!"

The deal is too good to pass up: free food prepared by a famous chef in exchange for a simple critique. On this particular day in January, more than a hundred people take part in consumer taste testing of perogies made with 30% bean flour; the recipe developed by Red River College (RRC) in collaboration with Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG).



Chef Gordon Bailey registers tasters.

"By supplementing the traditional wheat flour with navy bean flour, we increase nutrition but have little to no effect on the taste," says Chef Gordon Bailey. "It's a win-win situation."

Bailey is no stranger to culinary success. A native Winnipegger, Bailey moved to Prince Edward Island in the late 1990s, opening the nationally-acclaimed restaurants *Day Boat* and *Lot 30* before returning home in 2014. He now spends weekends sharing food through *The Sentruhl Project*, a part-time restaurant, and can be found on weekdays instructing young cooks at RRC.

Over three days, Bailey puts three RRC/MPSG recipes to the test: bean-flour perogies; pinto bean and chia seed 'Power Balls'; and almond and chocolate espresso cupcakes made with

black bean flour. His taste tasters are students, nearby office workers and Winnipeg foodies who have discovered the cafeteria in RRC's Paterson GlobalFoods Institute on Main Street serves sensational food at prices that are hard to beat.

"The consumer testing is Part Two of our recipes project with MPSG," says Mavis McRae, research manager for Applied Research & Commercialization at RRC. "Part One was developing recipes a year ago with Chef Brad Gray. Now, we are conducting taste tests with the public."

In 2014, MPSG contributed almost \$12,000 towards RRC's \$16,200 development of ten recipes in which edible bean flours and purées replaced wheat flour. The follow-up \$12,770 consumer survey will gauge opinions and consumption, including popular misconceptions that pulses are difficult to incorporate or affect the taste of a food product.

In addition to the surveys, RRC has sent the recipes to a certified lab for nutritional testing. All this information becomes invaluable in marketing pulses and pulse-based foods to consumers, manufacturers and restaurateurs increasingly interested in the health aspects of food.

McRae says Portage la Prairie-based Best Cooking Pulses, Inc. donated the black bean and navy bean flours for the recipes, recognizing the importance of working with industry groups and food researchers to promote the functional and health benefits of pulses.

"This type of research is growing in the industry," says McRae. "Many food



More than a hundred people tried the perogies and answered questions about taste and pulses consumption.

RRC's Mavis McRae spearheaded the development of new pulse recipes and consumer taste testing.



companies have staff dedicated to this sort of work."

"It's integral to product development," says Chef Bailey. "As a chef, you love the opportunity to create innovative dishes but it's also important to work with established foods. This feedback lets us know if we are missing the mark or onto something special."

An important goal with the RRC recipes was to boost protein and fibre content without losing taste and so-called functionality, which is simply how the ingredients interact with one another during preparation. Pulse flour is rich in fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals; low in fat and gluten-free.

"For me, the biggest surprise is I don't think that one single person could tell us there was a pulse product in these foods," says Chef Bailey. "The 'Power Balls,' for instance, had 50% pinto bean purée as opposed to 100% peanut butter and our taste testers loved them."

"Everyone is really interested in this work," says McRae. "The word is getting out about pulses."

Results are expected in the spring of 2016. You can read more about the consumer taste testing and the development of pulse recipes at www.manitobapulse.ca/mpga-funded_projects/consumer-taste-testing-of-recipes-containing-pulses/. ■



A table of taste testers sample bean-flour perogies at RRC's Main Street campus in January.