

Peanuts as a Source of Vegetable Protein: Past Successes and Future Challenges

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The current interest in nonanimal sources of protein in the human diet has increased exponentially in past few years. Peanuts are well positioned to benefit from this phenomenon. Defatted roasted peanuts have been used to produce flours and powders with high levels of protein that are used in a range of food products. Marketing strategies to emphasize these aspects have brought renewed attention to these products. Recent research has reported on improvements to human health related to consumption of these products.

As a legume, peanuts which are processed by operations other than roasting can be the source of peanut protein with different functionality and applications that can put them on par with more typical sources of vegetable protein such as peas and beans. Higher value products can be produced from peanut that can serve as ingredients in meat substitutes, extruded snacks, bioactive peptides, and other nutraceuticals. Investigations into possibilities for new directions for applications of peanut protein are available and their focus will be discussed.