Improved breast cancer imaging, healthier pizza and other scientific advances highlighted during ACS national meeting

CHICAGO, Tuesday, March 27, 2007 — News that chemists at the University of Maryland have developed a way to make healthier pizza by boosting the antioxidants in the dough has excited pizza-lovers worldwide. Presented Monday afternoon at the 233rd national meeting of the American Chemical Society, it’s quite fitting that news on this topic was announced in a city famous for its pizza. It’s just one of many exciting stories emerging from research presented at the meeting and in ACS journals. Highlights include:

Healthier pizza — Chemists Lucy Yu and Jeffrey Moore, of the University of Maryland, grabbed the world’s attention when they described how to boost the antioxidant content of pizza dough by optimizing baking and fermentation methods, a finding that could lead to healthier pizza. The study was part of the Agricultural and Food Chemistry Division’s “Graduate Student Symposium.” News about the study was broadcast by NBC television affiliates in Washington, D.C., and across the nation as well as by CNN. The study was also covered by Reuters, ABC News, MSNBC, BBC News, the New York Post, and many other news outlets.

Improved imaging for breast cancer — On Monday, researchers at Harvard Medical School described a new contrast agent that may provide a simpler way to diagnose breast cancer. The presentation was part of the Organic Chemistry Division’s symposium “New Reactions and Methodology.” Coverage includes: Chicago Public Radio, Channel 4 News (UK), the Telegraph (UK), and other outlets.

Grape-seed extract targets skin cancer — On Sunday, researchers at the University of Alabama-Birmingham announced that grape seed extract, a dietary supplement, shows promise in animal studies as a way to prevent skin cancer. The study was part of the Agricultural and Food Chemistry Division’s symposium “Natural Products, Diets and Cancer Prevention.” Coverage includes: Reuters, MSNBC, New York Post, Scientific American, and news outlets in China and Croatia.
Color-changing sunglasses — High-tech sunglasses that allow the wearer to instantly change the color of their lenses were described Tuesday by researchers at the University of Washington. The presentation was part of the Division of Polymeric Materials: Science & Engineering symposium “Conjugated Oligomers and Polymers.” The story was covered by the Associated Press (AP), Seattle-Post Intelligencer and other U.S. and Canadian outlets.

Dipstick test for food spoilage — News about ongoing efforts to develop a consumer kit to test for food spoilage continues to generate good coverage. A radio news release about the study was picked up by USA Radio network, a national outlet with 1,119 affiliates and an audience of 1.86 million.

Sugar-powered battery — A fuel cell battery that runs on sugar, presented at the ACS meeting yesterday, continues to generate strong news coverage. The story was picked up by the following outlets: Herald-Times (Indiana), The Mac Observer, PC World Magazine (Australia), Glasgow Daily Record (UK), Carib Journal, E Canada Now, iT Wire (Australia), and Fuel Cell Today.

Ladybug taint — News that ladybugs contain a chemical that can foul the odor and taste of wine, a condition called ‘ladybug taint,’ was covered by United Press International (UPI), New York Post, and other outlets, including Web sites in China and the United Kingdom.

Cancer-fighting blueberries — News that blueberries contain a chemical that may help prevent colon cancer was carried by the following outlets: Washington Times (March 27 print version, p. A9), Washington Post (online), Reuters, WebMD, Forbes, CBS News, Scientific American, Fox News, WEAU-TV (Wisconsin), WFIE-TV (Indiana), Press TV (Iran), Daily Mail (UK), and others.

ACS Journals in the News — Two reports from ACS journals, the Journal of Agricultural & Food Chemistry and Biomacromolecules, are featured in the New York Times (Science Times section) today as a result of the weekly ‘PressPac’ from ACS Communications. One report describes how tomatoes growing using diluted seawater have higher levels of antioxidants than those grown using only freshwater, a finding that could lead to healthier tomatoes. The other report describes efforts to transform Roundup, a popular herbicide that kills weeds, into an herbicidal paint coating.

Prepared by ACS Office of Communications, March 27, 2007, noon EDT.

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