Abstract
Health properties and uses of soybean, as well as the different chemical and botanical characteristics of this legume are shown in this review. Soybean represents an excellent source of high quality protein, it has a low content in saturated fat, it contains a great amount of dietary fibre and its isoflavone content makes it singular among other legumes. Many researches have been carried out into the benefits of legumes: chickpeas, beans, lentils and soy, among others, but characterization and positive health effects of soybeans have been recently studied. The interest in this legume has increased because of its functional components. Most of the studies have been focused on soybean protein as a possible source of prevention against cardiovascular disease. This positive effect may be due to a decrease in serum cholesterol concentrations. In addition, there are many studies on isoflavones, non-nutritive substances, associated with prevention and treatment of different chronic diseases. Moreover, some studies have shown the health properties of soy dietary fibre. Therefore, it would be interesting to consider the replacement of animal based foods for soybean foods in order to obtain some nutritional benefits.

Keywords
Soybean, Diabetes, Cholesterol, Cancer, Menopause, Osteoporosis.