

Comments on Olive Oil Standards\_ vossen.txt

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Subject: Comments on Olive Oil Standards

The USDA - FDA acceptance of the International Olive Oil Council (IOOC) Standards for olive oil imported into the USA or grown in the USA is long overdue. Most, but not all of the growers and processors that I work with adhere to these standards voluntarily now. The problem lies in the fact that some do not and that lower cost/quality oils can be sold at a higher price simply by calling it something else. Many people have profited by this scheme for years, which has deceived consumers and cheated legitimate producers. Unfortunately, quality in olive oil is difficult to define. Developing our own standards here in the USA will be very time consuming and probably would ultimately only deliver something very close to the IOOC standards anyway. I wholeheartedly endorse the acceptance of the IOOC standards in the USA. These standards are a work in progress and may need to be modified from time to time.

The predominant influence of the European countries in developing the standards may have led to certain specifications for oil chemical compositions that benefit their specific industries. Specifically I am referring to the levels of linolenic acid, which may be difficult to meet anywhere in the world under certain growing conditions. This specific item is currently under discussion within the IOOC, the European Union, Codex Alimentarius, and by major producing countries such as Spain, Italy, Australia, Greece, etc. The USA should get involved in these discussions since it is in our best interest to protect domestic producers and in their best interest, because we are the world's largest market for olive oil outside the EU.

I established the only IOOC recognized taste panel in the USA. This taste panel of trained tasters will be available to evaluate olive oils for the sensory requirements of the IOOC standards if accepted in the USA.

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