



FAQs on new California Olive Oil Standards

Q: Do the new standards impact my olive oil business?

A: Essentially, no. The approved standards apply ONLY to California “handlers” (i.e. producers or millers) of 5,000 gallons or more of olive oil made from California olives. The standard does not apply to olive oil produced anywhere else (97% of what is sold in the U.S.) or to small California producers.

Even if you are currently selling California olive oil, there should be no change to your buying or product sheets. The different grade names and labeling rules in the standard only affect grades not currently produced in California.

Q: How will the standard be implemented?

A: Although the standards are “effective” September 26, 2014, there is not an implementation plan in place. The CDFA hearing findings acknowledge that no certified testing labs or certified tasting panels exist in the U.S. at this time. It is unclear how testing will actually be carried out.

Q: How is the California standard more strict than other standards?

A: For extra virgin olive oil (the only grade sold commercially from California right now), the changes affect a few quality limits. The quality parameters test for fruit condition, processing and oxidation. For California Extra Virgin Olive Oil there are slight changes from global standards to three (3) quality limits:

Measure	Tests For	IOC Limit	OOCC Limit
Free Acidity (FFA)	Fruit quality & processing care	0.8	0.5
Peroxide Value	Primary oxidation; May change over time & with excessive heat, light or air	20	15
Absorbancy in Ultraviolet: K232	Oxidation and rancidity; Increases over time and with excessive heat, light or air	(optional) ≤ 2.50	≤ 2.40

Additionally, the standard adds two new tests not used in any other mandatory standard anywhere in the world, PPP and DAGs. The CDFA hearing included international expert testimony showing these parameters change over time and can’t be definitively interpreted, but the CDFA’s decision says the inconsistency is not a concern at this time because all the oils will be tested within at most 6 months of production and also prior to bottling.

The limits approved are different than the limits used in the UC Davis Olive Center reports and are easier to meet:

	Samples Taken	PPP Limit	DAGs Limit
UC Davis Olive Center Report	From store shelves	≤ 15	≥ 40
OOCC Standard	Before bottling	≤ 17	≥ 35

Q: How is the California standard less strict than other standards?

A: The original proposal included less restrictive limits for olive oil purity tests which would have made it easier to adulterate the product with other oils like canola, palm or refined oils. These limits contradicted the existing California standard for olive oils and were taken out of the standard. Since these tests aren’t included in the



current implementation of the standard, the testing will not be able to guarantee the oils are not adulterated. The following tests are MISSING from the OOC standard:

Extra Virgin Olive Oil Tests for Authenticity		
	Measure	Checks For
Fatty Acid Profile	Palmitic acid (C16:0)	Seed oil contamination
	Palmitoleic acid (C16:1)	
	Heptadecenoic acid (C17:1)	
	Oleic acid (C18:1)	
	Linoleic acid (C18:2)	
	Linolenic acid (C18:3)	
	Gadoleic acid (eicosenoic) (C20:1)	
Sterols Content (%)	Cholesterol	Seed oils or animal fat
	Campesterol	Seed oil contamination
	Delta-7-stigmastenol	
	Apparent beta-sitosterol (sum of six measures)	
Total sterols	Solvent-extracted oils (olive-pomace oil)	
Total sterol content (mg/kg)		
Fatty Acid in 2-position of triglycerides	Erythrodiol and uvaol content (% total sterols)	Evidence of re-esterified oils
	2-glyceryl monopalmitate (C:16:0 ≤ 14.0%)	
	2-glyceryl monopalmitate (C:16:0 > 14.0%)	

Q: If nothing changes, why is the olive oil industry concerned about these standards?

A: Most importantly, the standards were developed without scientific rigor. Additionally, the standards would impose both trade and marketing barriers on the category as a whole.

1. All grade name and labeling changes affect products not produced in California, for example
 - a. Marketing terms such as “cold pressed” are still allowed on extra virgin olive oil, but marketing terms used commercially for olive oil, like “pure” are banned.

- b. The label “Olive Oil” is banned and would instead have to say “Refined-Olive Oil Blend Composed of refined-olive oil and virgin (or extra virgin) olive oil”.
 - c. The label “Olive-Pomace Oil” is banned and would instead have to say “Refined Olive-Pomace Oil Blend Composed of refined olive-pomace oil and virgin (or extra virgin) olive oils”.
2. The standards rely heavily on taste testing, which has given inconsistent results, especially in off-the-shelf samples, and been debated as a biased tool for grading.
 - a. The standard even requires taste-testing for non-virgin grades of olive oil, despite the fact that there is no benchmark or method in existence for taste-testing these grades.
 3. The standards don’t include purity testing, which is a critical foundation for quality monitoring in the category.
 4. There are no IOC-certified testing labs or tasting panels available in the U.S. to check for compliance with the standards.

The NAOOA recommends buyers continue olive oil quality monitoring by testing for *full compliance* with International Olive Council (IOC) standards.

www.aboutoliveoil.org
info@naooa.org

Twitter: @NAOOAoliveoil

Facebook: North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA)

North American Olive Oil Association
 3301 Route 66, Suite 205, Bldg C, Neptune, NJ 07753
 (732) 922-3008 phone
 (732) 922-3590 fax