

2017/18 OOC Quality Test Results

The Olive Oil Commission of California's sampling and testing program continues to work to ensure California handlers are correctly labeling the grade of their olive oil and performance has improved overall since the start of the program in 2014. During the large harvest of 2017/18, the OOC focused on more stringently enforcing the requirements of its mandatory government sampling and testing program and the number of samples collected in 2018 was increased significantly.

During the sampling and testing program, inspectors from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) collect a designated number of olive oil samples from each California olive oil handler. These samples are sent to an accredited third-party laboratory for sensory and chemical analysis. Under the OOC program, handlers sample and test their own olive oils providing all test results to the OOC. Test results from samples collected by both producers and by the CDFA are analyzed by the UC Davis Olive Center.

Results from 2018 tests found that 92 percent of the samples were accurately labeled when comparing the OOC's independent testing with handler grade labeling. This is an improvement over the first year's test results in 2014 when 85 percent of the samples were found to be labeled correctly. However, it should be noted that of the 5 samples from 2018 found with inconsistent test results, two were designated by the handler as a lower grade than the California Extra Virgin Olive Oil standard. Testing by the OOC found that the two samples did meet the higher standard. No change in labeling was required in these cases. The remaining 3 of the 5 samples were found by the OOC as not meeting the California Extra Virgin Olive Oil standard. Handlers were contacted and required to change the package labeling to accurately reflect the grade. In the end, the OOC program continues to prove valuable in assuring consumers that quality of California olive oil can be trusted. A list of both mandatory and voluntary OOC members in good standing can be found [here](#).

The 2018 analysis also found that 93 percent of all oil produced in the state is California Extra Virgin Olive Oil. This is a slight decrease in the percentage of California olive oils from the previous year, when 99 percent of the crop was determined as Extra Virgin. The California Extra Virgin Olive Oil standard is the most stringent in the United States and among the most stringent in the world. Even with this slight decrease in the overall percentage of California Extra Virgin Olive Oil produced statewide in 2018, California handlers continue to showcase their commitment to high-quality olive oil.

The 2018 sampling and testing program was the largest conducted since the founding of the OOC in 2014. The sampling and testing program has grown from 104 total samples in 2014 to 187 samples in 2018. This is due in part to the increased number of samples collected by CDFA officials which went from 5 samples per handler to 6 samples. Additionally, for the first time the OOC had several handlers who participated in the program voluntarily under new provisions that have made this program more accessible to smaller producers.

The full 2018 report on California olive oil quality testing by the UC Davis Olive Center can be found [here](#). For more information regarding OCCC research, membership, or the sampling and testing program visit their website at www.oliveoilcommission.org/.