

Olive Oil import trends in China

Chinese imports of olive oil and olive pomace increased exponentially between the 2001/02 and 2011/12 crop years (see Chart I) but contracted 6 pc between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The monthly data (Chart II) for 2012/13 show a sharp decrease in imports in the first seven months of the season from October 2012 to April 2013 but they then reversed direction and turned upwards in the next three months from May to July 2013.

Despite this recovery, just two months away from the close of the crop year everything seems to indicate that imports will be lower than in 2011/12.

European Union countries supply 90 pc of China's imports, with Spain leading the way (61 pc), followed by Italy (22 pc), Greece (6 pc) and Portugal (1 pc). The remaining 10 pc comes from Tunisia (3 pc), Turkey (2 pc), Australia (2 pc) and Syria (1 pc).

Chart I – China:

trend of imports of olive oil and olive pomace oil, 1997/98–2012/13 crop years (tonnes)

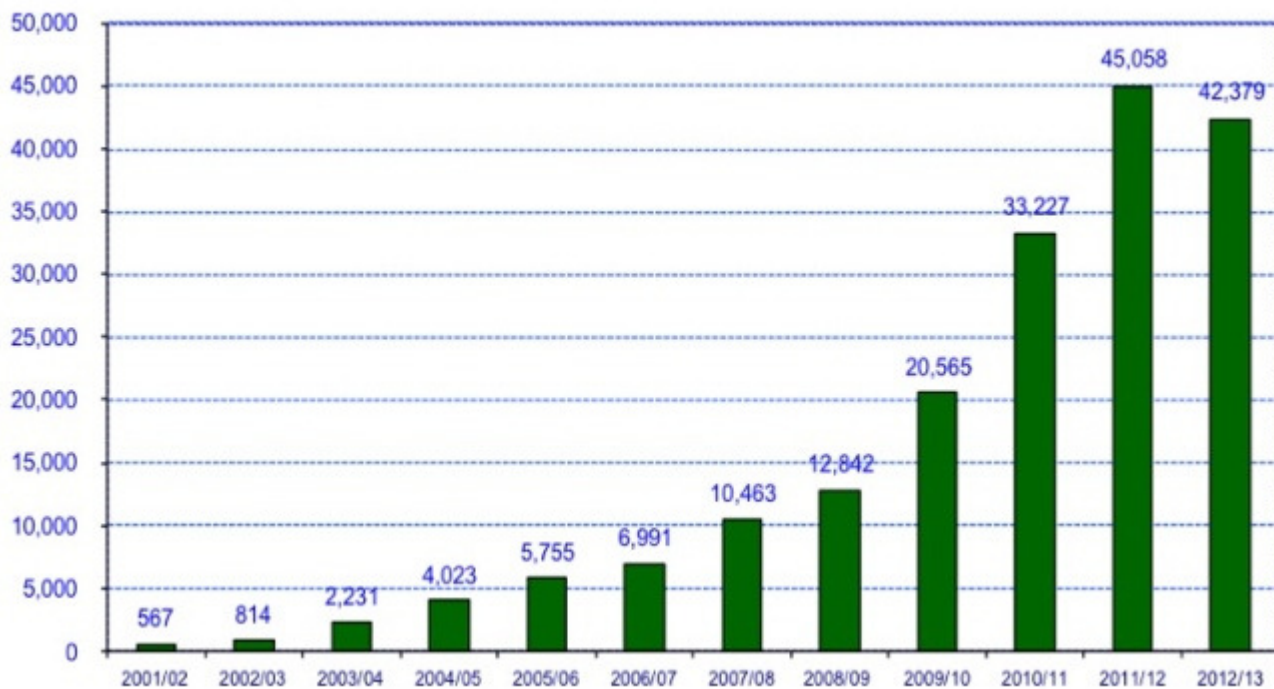
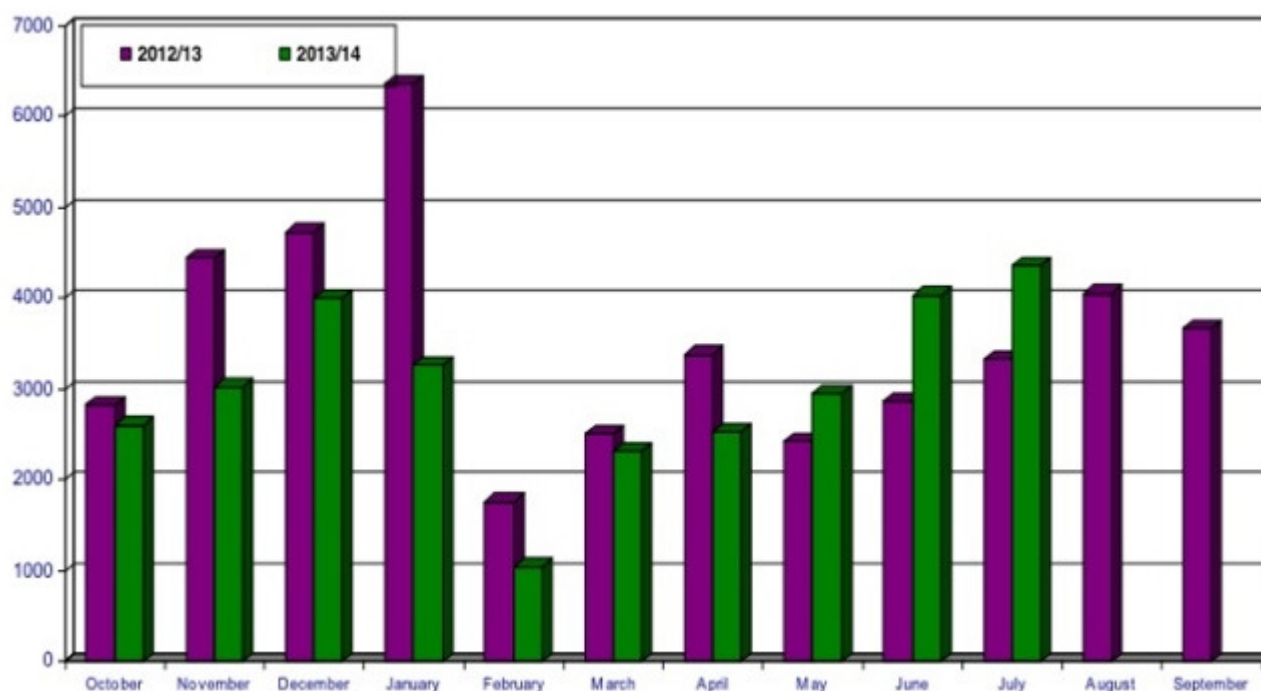


Chart II – China: trend of monthly imports of olive oil and olive pomace oil (tonnes)



Chinese imports in the last three crop years are split by product category in Chart III. Imports of virgin olive oil (customs heading 150910) have recorded season-on-season growth, increasing their share from 82 pc in 2010/11 to 84 pc in 2011/12 and 88 pc in 2012/13.

Product belonging to the olive oil grade (heading 150990) accounted for 7 pc of total imports in 2010/11, going down to 5 pc in the next two crop years while imports of olive pomace oil (heading 151000) dropped from 11 pc of the total in 2012/11 and 2011/12 to 7 pc in 2012/13.

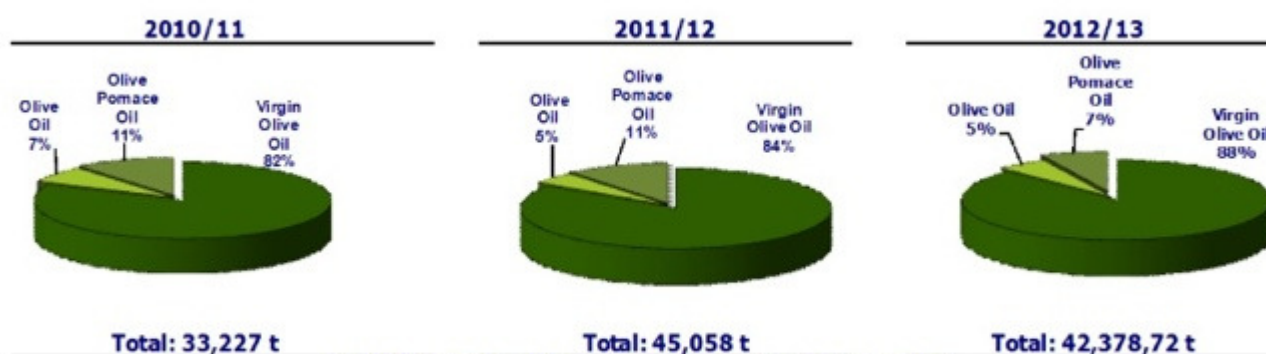


Chart III – China: breakdown of imports by oil category and crop year

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