



California expects a significant decrease in its olive oil production

As reported by the California Olive Oil Commission (OOCC), with updated information from its members -which represent 90% of the olive growers in this region- the volume of olive production this year is expected to be "much lower". The organization has established its harvest estimate at 2.5 million gallons (about 9.5 million liters), which would mean a significant decrease compared to the production of 3.37 million gallons (12.7 million liters) registered last year.

During the June Board of Directors Meeting, the Olive Oil Commission of California members provided an update on the anticipated California olive oil crop with all expecting much lower volume in the 2018 year. The organization set its pre-season crop estimate for a total of 2.5 million gallons. This is a significant decrease from last year's 3.37 million-gallon crop. The decrease in production stems from the nature of olive oil trees to produce a small crop in alternating years along with crop damage caused by freezing temperatures this past spring.

"The state's olive oil crop is down primarily because of the cold weather," said Richard Marchini of Marchini Ag and a member of the OOCC Board. He explained that the freeze, which occurred in late February, hit production areas hard damaging many orchards in the state. "The frost is the major culprit for the reduced crop for 2018," he highlighted.

Composition and budget

On the other hand, also during the annual meeting -which took place on June 13 in Sacramento- the California Olive Oil Commission approved a budget of 582,000 euros for the 2018/19 campaign (compared to the 729,000 euros in the budget of 2017/18).

Among other issues, the Board agreed to reduce its budget for various OOCC programs and welcomed its two new rotating members: Gregg Kelley and Matt Loshe, both from California Olive Ranch.

This Board is composed of six producer members, three managing members and one public member. Likewise, the OOCC houses an Advisory Committee composed of olive farmers with an annual production of less than 5,000 gallons (about 19,000 liters), to ensure the defense of the interests of small farmers and processors.



OOCC Seeks Third-Party Laboratories

The OOCC has also issued a Request For Proposal for accredited third-party laboratories to conduct sensory and chemical analysis of olive oil samples collected by government officials under its mandatory sampling and testing program for the 2018 harvest. These accredited third-party laboratories selected by the OOCC will be responsible for testing olive oil samples for chemical and sensory analysis. Valid accreditations for third party laboratories may include but are not limited to the International Olive Oil Council and the American Oil Chemists' Society. This years OOCC testing program will begin in October 2018 and continue through March 2019.

To be considered California Extra Virgin Olive Oil, the oil standards must meet minimum California Department of Food and Agriculture standards. The standards for California Extra Virgin Olive Oil are stricter than both the United States Department of Agriculture and the International Olive Council.

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