

## NAOOA requests the US government not to apply tariffs on olive oil

**The North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA) is urging the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to remove olive oil from the list of European products to be slapped with new tariffs in retaliation for E.U. subsidies on airplanes.**

Olive oil is one of the healthiest foods we can eat, highlights the NAOOA. The FDA has recognized olive oil as a food beneficial for cardiovascular health, but its benefits go well beyond that. The USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommended the Mediterranean Diet, for which olive oil is a principal component, as one of three healthy dietary eating patterns. Scientific consultant company Exponent has estimated that getting Americans to increase adherence to the Mediterranean Diet will result in a \$20 billion dollar savings in treatment for many ailments beyond heart disease, including cancer, diabetes and dementia. In fact, popular diet doctor and cardiac surgeon Steven Gundry, M.D. has gone so far as to say "the whole purpose of food is to get olive oil into your mouth!"

Yet, as the NAOOA has informed, the USTR has proposed tariffs on olive oils among a long list of products from the European Union in retaliation for E.U. aeronautics industry subsidies. This is unjustified. There is no connection whatsoever between aeronautics and olive oils. Moreover, Americans have no realistic alternative supply in place of European olive oil, which typically accounts for over 70% of the world's annual production, coming mostly from Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal. The U.S. consumes approximately 300,000 metric tons of olive oil, and the United States itself produced only 10,000 metric tons in 2018-19. A 2018 Attitude and Usage Study commissioned by the NAOOA and the American Olive Oil Producer's Association confirmed that health is a principal factor that leads Americans to purchase olive oil. So a tariff on European olive oil primarily will punish American consumers who will either have to pay increased prices for olive oils, or switch to less healthy--or even unhealthy--but cheaper cooking fats.

Olive oil is the only product on the USTR's exhaustive proposed list that is recommended by American doctors, nutritionists and dietitians



to their patients for the prevention or treatment of chronic diseases. The USTR estimates that the total import value of products for which it is proposing retaliatory tariffs amounts to \$21 billion. Yet conspicuously missing from the USTR proposed list are pharmaceuticals and medical devices and equipment. The value of European pharmaceutical products exported to the U.S. alone amounts to nearly \$50 billion. This is more than double the entire proposed list (and more than fifty times the value of olive oil imports). Of course, the USTR is justified in leaving pharmaceutical and medical devices and equipment off the list because to include them would impact the health of U.S. citizens, especially to the extent there may be no realistic alternative supply of such products either. The same consideration should be given to olive oils.

Additionally, though most olive oil is imported into the United States, the industry supports thousands of domestic jobs. From longshoremen who unload olive oil at America's port to the manufacturing jobs at domestic olive oil bottling plants to the truck drivers who transport it around the country, the olive oil industry is powered by American workers.

"The USTR should recognize the importance of olive oil consumption to Americans' health, and the fact that there is no realistic alternative source of supply. As a result, American consumers would primarily be the ones punished by a tariff on olive oils. Accordingly, the USTR should remove olive oils from the proposed list of products just as it excluded pharmaceuticals and medical devices and equipment from the list", concludes the press note submitted by the NAOOA.

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