

OOCC Benchmark Study and Other Industry Updates

Moving past the research presentations featured during Olive Oil Day, several individuals provided various updates on olive oil industry activities.

Kyle Birchard of Integrative Economics gave an update on an Olive Oil Industry benchmarking survey called out in the OOCC strategic plan. The plan is to benchmark the scale and yields of CA olive oil production and update this annually. The lack of reliable data on CA olive acreage is obvious from the differing numbers from USDA-NASS, County Ag Commissioners and the Ag Census. Accurate benchmarking by region and variety is essential to support good decision-making down the road.

Some provisional results from 2020 show 15,385 acres in oil olives, total olive production of 50,512 tons and total oil production of 2,046,613 gallons. The averages were 3.3 tons/acre, 40.5 gals/ton and 133 gals/acre. Further classification of "other" varieties, spacing information, organic status and other relevant information can be added to the survey. The data will be used to help set and measure research goals. A more complete update of the survey's objectives and findings will be provided in a future newsletter.

Javier Fernandez Salvador, director of the UC Davis Olive Center gave a brief update highlighting the Center's desire to be responsive to industry needs. A series of listening sessions with specialists and industry will be scheduled to give stakeholders an opportunity to provide ideas and input on Olive Center activities.

An update from **Kimberly Houlding, President/CEO of American Olive Oil Producers Association (AOOPA)** focused primarily on the FDA standard of identity (SOI). Two competing petitions for a US olive oil SOI were filed with FDA, one from AOOPA & Deoleo, the other from North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA). The FDA instructed the two parties to resolve the multiple differences to a 90% alignment. Negotiations between NAOOA and AOOPA/Deoleo have reached a 90%+ degree of alignment, so this new version will be submitted to FDA. After review by FDA, there will be a public comment period, and then a decision by FDA to approve or reject the petition.

Shaana Rahman, president of California Olive Oil Council (COOC) presented an update on the association's activities. The COOC has an ongoing seal certification program with sensory evaluation by the COOC taste panel. They will also have their annual competition for member olive oils. The COOC received a \$446,120 grant to promote CA extra virgin olive oil to consumers in an effort to offset some of the losses experienced in the foodservice sector during the 2020 and 2021 season as a result of the pandemic. Grant activities will conclude in mid 2024.