

OOCC Board Vows to Add Value for Growers

As the Olive Oil Commission of California prepares for the coming season, its Board of Directors is committing to addressing the issue of increased profitability for olive oil farmers. The OOCC Board met in Sacramento June 6 to establish a crop estimate for California's 2022/23 olive oil harvest and to approve a budget for the OOCC's fiscal year.

The crop will be down significantly this year – both because of weather related events and because olive oil trees tend to alternate heavier and lighter crops. But the Board agreed that things have been tough for olive oil growers in recent years as many have faced reduced production and higher costs. Along with most California farmers, olive growers are also being impacted by changing weather, lack of available water, inflation and supply chain issues.

The OOCC, formed in 2014, has created value for California olive oil growers in many ways. The organization has enhanced the reputation of California olive oil by establishing requirements that ensure the state produces high quality olive oil. The OOCC's mandatory government sampling and testing program verifies that California olive oil meets these high standards and that bottles are accurately labeled. Last year, new legislation was passed to regulate the use of the word "California" on olive oil labels.

Along with these accomplishments, the OOCC Board agreed it's time to focus on activities designed to increase grower profits such as funding additional research to help increase yields, improve quality and reduce costs.

The OOCC Executive Committee will be meeting over the next few months to conduct an overarching review of all OOCC activities, policies and procedures and to consider options for restructuring that might create additional value for farmers. The OOCC Board will meet again in September to review potential recommendations.