Olive oil marketing standards

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European Commission publishes Regulation updating marketing standards for olive oil

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2104 of 29 July 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards marketing standards for olive oil, and repealing Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2568/91 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012

Update

On 11 November 2022, the EU published a Regulation revising the existing marketing standards for olive oil with the aim of guaranteeing product quality and effectively combating fraud. The new Regulation replaces existing rules on the marketing of olive oil governed by Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2568/91 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012.

Impacted products

Olive oil

What is changing?

The text of the marketing standards has been clarified in accordance with the Glossary of Interpretations for olive oil marketing standards (European Commission 2019).

The physicochemical characteristics for the different olive oil categories have been modified to correspond to the revised trade standard (International Olive Council 2019).

These marketing standards aim to guarantee the quality and reputation of olive oils, combat fraud and ensure that consumer expectations are met.

The amended Regulation:

- defines categories of olive oil (e.g. distinguishing extra-virgin, virgin, lampante, refined olive oil)
- limits blending, permitting only blending of virgin oil with other vegetable oils, and only the incorporation of virgin olive oil into foodstuffs (Art. 3)

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- protects authenticity, limiting olive oil presented to consumers to packaging of a maximum 5 litres and requiring an opening system that can no longer be sealed after opening
- establishes mandatory labelling rules (on the categories of oils, storage conditions and place of origin) (Arts. 6–9)
- defines optional reserved terms that may appear on labels (e.g. first cold pressing; cold extraction,) (Art. 10)
- restricts an indication of harvesting year to extra-virgin and virgin olive oil, and only where 100% of the contents of the container come from that harvest (Art. 11)
- establishes trade descriptions and required references to percentages for blends of oils (Art. 12).

Why?

The previous marketing standards for olive oil date back to 2012 (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 29/2012). Experience of interpreting and implementing the standards over the past decade has demonstrated the need for certain modifications and clarifications.

Timeline

The Regulation entered into force on 24 November 2022.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The new regulation is generally not expected to have significant implications for the olive oil sector (INFAOLIVA 2022).

Third country exporters should note that the quality characteristics set out in Annex I may sometimes differ from those established by the International Olive Council (2018), e.g. the organoleptic characteristics of lampante oil.

The Regulation standardises the information producers may include on the label regarding the organoleptic characteristics (taste or smell) of olive oil. This is intended to restrict potentially misleading claims about the characteristics of olive oil, but some EU producers feel that the Regulation is unnecessarily restrictive, potentially limiting opportunities to distinguish their products and develop the olive oil market (e.g. France Olive 2022).

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Background

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Resources

European Commission (2019) Glossary of Interpretations in Respect of Marketing Standards for Olive Oil and Olive-Pomace Oil Regulation (EU) No 29/2012 and Regulation (EEC) No 2568/912.

France Olive (2022) European Commission: Have your say > Published initiatives > Olive oil – changes to marketing standards > Feedback from: France Olive, F3122958.

INFAOLIVA (2022) European Commission: Have your say > Published initiatives > Olive oil – changes to marketing standards > Feedback from: Federación Española de Industriales Fabricantes de Aceite de Oliva, F3120034.

International Olive Council (2018) Sensory analysis of olive oil: Method for the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oil.

International Olive Council (2019) Trade Standard applying to olive oils and olive-pomace oils.

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Sources

Commission Delegated Regulation 2022/2104

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012

Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2568/91

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