Olive Oil Commission of California Newsletter

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Sustainable Food Summit

Staff recently attended the Sustainable Food Summit, where industry leaders explored emerging trends shaping the future of food production and marketing. Key discussions focused on regenerative agriculture, sustainable packaging, water stewardship, evolving policy frameworks, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in strengthening supply chains and product development. Sessions also highlighted innovation in alternative ingredients, upcycled inputs, and new food technologies, alongside practical guidance on sustainability claims and consumer engagement. Overall, the summit underscored the increasing importance of measurable environmental impact, transparent sourcing, and strategic adaptation to regulatory and market shifts—issues that will continue to influence opportunities and competitiveness across California.

Handler Definition Change

Beginning January 1, 2026, a new California law will expand the definition of "handler" under the Olive Oil Commission of California to include toll processors and custom millers. This means that any operation that processes or mills olives into olive oil on behalf of a producer will now be subject to the same assessment collection and remittance requirements as traditional handlers. This change applies to toll processors or custom millers working with producers whose oil production totals 5,000 gallons or more, producers below this threshold remain exempt. Under the new requirements, handlers must collect the per-gallon assessment from qualifying producers and remit those funds directly to the Commission in the prescribed time and manner. Handlers are personally liable for these payments, even if a producer fails to pay, and failure to comply may result in penalties.

Olive Oil Annual Sampling Program

The Olive Oil Commission of California Annual Sampling Program is nearing completion for the current season. All handlers have now received their testing results, along with their Member in Good Standing certificates or notification if their oil did not meet OOCC standards. This season, there were 12 mills exceeding the 5,000-gallon threshold and qualifying for CDFA random sampling.

In total, approximately 4.29 million gallons of olive oil were reported, representing an increase from the previous season. With sampling and testing now complete, University of California Davis is currently preparing the Final Annual Sampling Program Report, which is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. This report will provide a comprehensive overview of compliance, quality metrics, and key findings from the season. The results will also help inform future program improvements and support ongoing efforts to maintain high standards across California's olive oil industry.

Research Update

Epidemiology and Management of Olive Knot

This project is working to find safer and more effective treatments for olive knot. Dr. Adaskaveg and his team tested a wide range of new products—including food-grade preservatives, essential-oil-based materials, and experimental formulations. Kasumin performed very well. They also found that mixing certain copper products can reduce total copper use without reducing disease control. Progress continues on getting these products federally registered for use.

Land IQ- Acreage Mapping

The goal of this project is to map all olive acreage grown for oil and provide detailed information, including grove age, county location, and planting system. The team used existing state water mapping data and then refined it using agronomic knowledge, pesticide use reports, satellite imagery, county crop reports, and remote sensing to distinguish between olives grown for oil and table olives.

Sap Analysis Summary

This project aimed to evaluate plant sap analysis as a faster, more cost-effective alternative to traditional lab testing for monitoring nutrient levels in olive trees. While sap extraction was found to be feasible, it proved to be time-consuming and labor-intensive, offering little advantage over standard leaf tissue methods.

Additionally, results from handheld sap analysis tools did not align with commercial lab data, raising concerns about accuracy and reliability. Overall, the findings suggest that continuing this approach would not be a practical or efficient use of grower resources.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Mary McDonnell at mmcdonnell@oliveoilcommission.org.

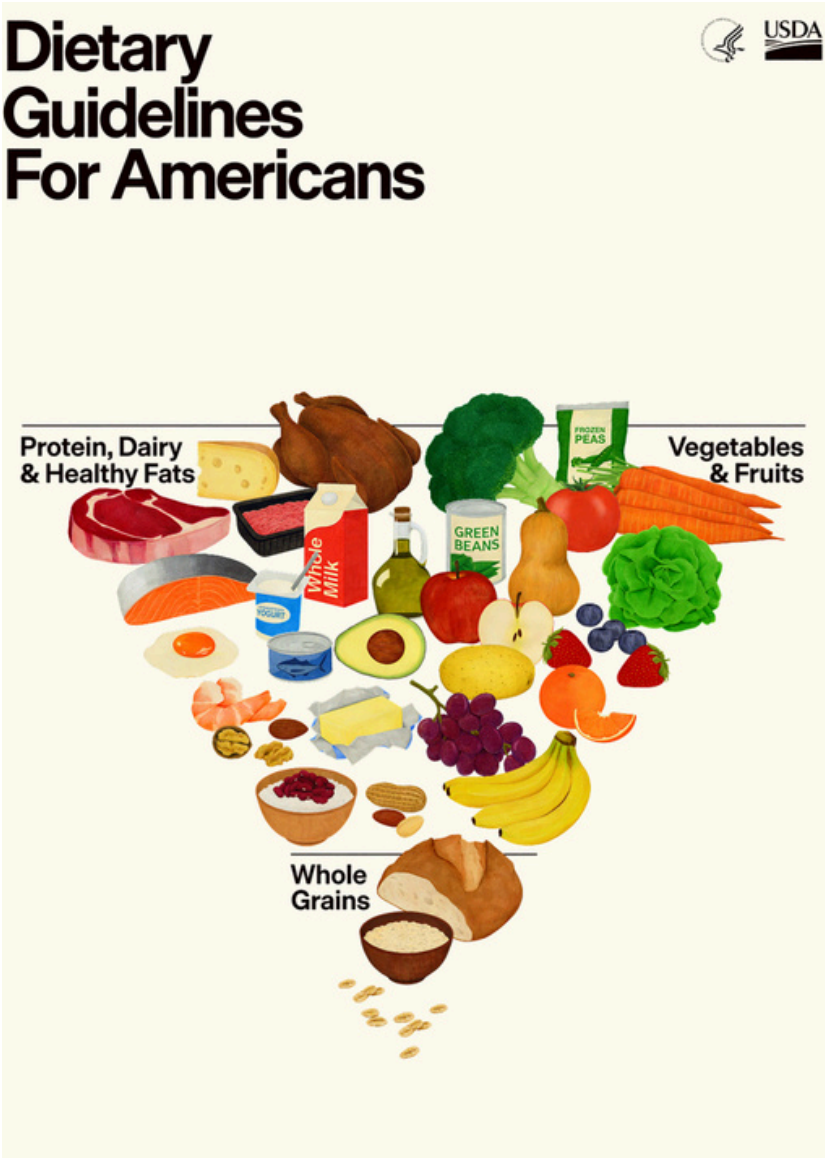
Olive Oil Conference 2026

The 2026 Olive Oil Conference, held at the Hilton Stockton, was a tremendous success, bringing together growers, industry experts, researchers, and valued partners from across the industry for several days of meaningful education, networking, and collaboration. Attendees engaged in insightful presentations, panel discussions, and productive conversations that explored current challenges, emerging trends, and future opportunities within the olive oil sector, while fostering a strong sense of community among those dedicated to advancing the California olive oil industry. The program featured a diverse range of topics, from production practices and sustainability to market trends and research advancements, providing valuable takeaways for attendees at every level of the industry. We sincerely appreciate everyone who attended and contributed to making this year's conference both impactful and engaging, and we encourage you to scan the QR code to share your feedback as we continue to improve future events.

SCAN ME

2026 North Sacramento Valley Olive Day

At the North Sacramento Valley Olive Day, Staff presented the key priorities and focus areas of the following organizations: California Olive Committee, Olive Growers Council of California, and the Olive Oil Commission of California. In addition to Staff's presentation, there were a variety of guest speakers who shared updates on current research conducted by the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Service, as well as insights into market conditions for both table olives and olive oil production, providing attendees with a comprehensive and informative overview of the industry's current landscape and future outlook.



National Dietary Guidelines

In January 2026, the Trump Administration released the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2025–2030. The key changes and recommendations include avoiding highly processed foods, prioritizing protein, healthy fats, and dairy, and encouraging individuals to "eat a rainbow" of whole fruits and vegetables. Olive oil is also specifically listed in the new dietary guidelines as a recommended source of healthy fat. These updated guidelines reflect a continued emphasis on overall dietary patterns that support long-term health and chronic disease prevention, while reinforcing the importance of incorporating nutrient-dense, minimally processed foods into daily meals. The guidelines also place greater focus on building sustainable eating habits that can be maintained across different life stages and lifestyles. In addition, they highlight the role of balanced nutrition in supporting immune function, energy levels, and overall well-being. Collectively, these recommendations aim to guide Americans toward healthier, more informed food choices that can improve quality of life over time.

World Ag Expo- Tulare, CA

Staff had the opportunity to participate in the World Ag Expo in Tulare, where they hosted a booth on behalf of the Olive Oil Commission of California. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with growers, discussing current industry challenges, water management, emerging technologies, and the overall outlook for the industry. Staff also shared information about the commission's work, encouraged greater grower participation, and highlighted the benefits of membership while promoting continued planting and investment in the crop.

In addition, the team explored the trade show floor to observe the latest innovations and technologies that will help shape the future of agriculture, gaining insights into new equipment, sustainability practices, and advancements that may benefit the olive oil industry moving forward.

Future Events

Looking ahead, please save the date for March 17–19, 2027, at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District. Planning is already underway to build on this year's momentum by expanding educational opportunities, enhancing networking experiences, and continuing to deliver relevant, high-quality programming for attendees. We look forward to bringing the industry together once again for another successful and engaging conference, and we hope to see both returning participants and new faces in attendance.

📸 & Recipe: California Grown & James Collier

Fig and Mandarin Focaccia

Sweet, savory, and full of California flavor! This Fig & Mandarin Focaccia from CA GROWN combines fresh fruit with rich olive oil for a delicious twist on a classic bread. Perfect for holiday gatherings or entertaining!

For full recipe and instructions visit CA Grown

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