



**OLIVE OIL COMMISSION OF CALIFORNIA
GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, March 12, 2026
11:00 a.m.**

**2565 Alluvial Ave., Suite 152
Clovis, CA 93611**

**Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83197499989>**

**Meeting ID: 831 9749 9989
Conference Number: +1 (669) 900-6833**

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mary Mori – Chairwoman**
 - i. Roll Call
 - ii. Establish Quorum
 - iii. Approval of Previous Minutes: October 6, 2025 (**action item**) page 4

- II. CHAIRWOMAN’S COMMENTS**
 - i. 2026 Strategic Plan page 8

- III. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE** page 14

- IV. ANNUAL SAMPLING PROGRAM UPDATE**
 - i. Update on Sampling Program Timeline with CDFA and UC Davis page 15
 - ii. Update on OOC Lab Accreditation Website Page page 16

- V. 2026 OLIVE RING TEST FINAL REPORT** page 17

- VI. TOLL PROCESSING ENFORCEMENT DISCUSSION**
 - i. Decision Tree Document (**action item**) page 20
 - ii. Toll Processing Outreach Plan page 23

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

IX. ADJOURNMENT



GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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OLIVE OIL COMMISSION OF CALIFORNIA

GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY
OCTOBER 6, 2025
1:00 p.m.

OOCC
2565 Alluvial Avenue, Suite 152
Clovis, CA 93611

Zoom Information
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84045251214>

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Mary Mori called the meeting of the Grade and Standards Committee to order at 1:01 p.m. The following Committee Members were in attendance:

i. Roll Call

Mary MORI	-	California Olive Ranch
Bruce GOLINO	-	OOCC
Natalia RUIZ	-	Modern Olives Laboratory Services
Selina WANG	-	UC Davis
David GARCI-AGUIRRE	-	Corto Olive

STAFF:

Todd SANDERS	-	Olive Oil Commission of California
Michelle BORGES	-	Olive Oil Commission of California
Mary MCDONNELL	-	Olive Oil Commission of California
Ethan CRANMER	-	Olive Oil Commission of California

GUESTS

Dennis MANDERFIELD	-	CDFA
Laurel RUDOLPH	-	CDFA
Kimberly HOULDING	-	American Olive Oil Producers Association
Shirley Li	-	UC Davis

ii. Establish Quorum

Having received a sufficient number of Committee members present, a quorum was established.

iii. Approval of Previous Minutes – **ACTION**
The minutes of the May 28, 2025, meeting was presented to the Board for approval.

- **MOVED by GARCI-AGUIRRE, duly seconded by WANG, and unanimously carried THAT the minutes of May 28, 2025, be approved as presented. (MOTION 10-6-25 #1)**

II. CHAIRWOMAN’S COMMENTS

None

III. ANNUAL SAMPLING AND REPORT

The Annual Sampling Program was announced on October 6th, with the release of Form A and Form B tutorial videos. OOC staff will continue updating the website throughout the season with resources, reminders, and key information for participants.

Key Dates:

1. December 31 – Preliminary Form A due
2. January 15 – CDFA sampling begins
3. February 28 – Final Form A & Form B due
4. May 15 – Final Annual Sampling Program Report & Results

IV. 2026 STANDARD UPDATES

- i. Off the Shelf Testing Discussion

OCC staff is working with Kahn, Soares and Conway (KSC) to change the FAP and Sterol standard to reference the OCC standard instead of the USDA standards. OCC is reviewing the whole standard law to ensure all of the information is accurate and precisely represents the California olive oil industry and the OCC.

Today-January

Begin drafting amendment language
Shop for authors to carry the legislation
Begin to quietly engage industry sector

January-February

Legislature returns
Finalize amendment language and engage with legislative counsel
Socialize proposal with CDFA and Administration

February-September

Bill Introduction Deadline—Feb 20th
Policy Committee Hearings—April 24th
Appropriations Deadline—May 15th
Floor—May 29th
2nd House Policy Committee—July 2nd
Appropriations Deadline—August 14th
Floor—August 31st
Sent to the Governor for signature or veto—September 30th
Effective date-- January 1, 2027

V. 2026 OLIVE RING TEST

This year's Olive Oil Ring Test is underway, with results and analysis to follow. There are nine participants this year. Shirley Li, of UC Davis provided a report on participation and progress. In addition, Shirley Li will complete the Olive Ring Test report by March 2026.

VI. 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

The OCCC Grade and Standards Committee discussed the 2026 Strategic Plan and expectations for the strategic plan happening next year, focusing on the off-the-shelf testing. Staff will plan an off-site meeting in the Sacramento-Stockton area for January or February, to focus on strategic planning discussions.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Mary Mori adjourned Grade and Standards Committee meeting at 1:41 p.m.



Todd W. Sanders
Executive Director
Olive Oil Commission of California

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS FOR OCTOBER 6, 2025

MOTION 10-6-25 #1

APPROVED

MOVED by GARCI-AGUIRRE, duly seconded by WANG, and unanimously carried THAT the minutes of May 28, 2025, be approved as presented.

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

BACKGROUND:

Mary Mori and the OCCC Grade and Standards Committee will discuss goals and expectations of the future strategic plan.



O OCC Strategic Plan – March 2021

BIG SIX Goals for the Olive Oil Commission of California (“OCC”)

Goals should be **S.M.A.R.T.** (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely*)

- 1) Over the next four years, make the OCC the most valued authority on growing olives in California for extra virgin olive oil (“EVOO”) with the olive grower community, measured through an annual survey of assessment-paying members to help obtain authorization from the industry to continue beyond 2024. (EXECUTIVE).
- 2) By the end of year one in the strategic plan cycle, compile agreed-upon data to benchmark the scale and yields of our grower community (by variety) and update this data annually by staff or a third-party. (RESEARCH)
- 3) Over the next four years, execute research for the California olive grower community with that will help our California farmers achieve higher and more consistent tonnage and oil yields that maximizes farm gate returns (specific goals to be set post benchmarking). (RESEARCH)
- 4) Over the next four years, achieve 100% compliance with OCC labeling and grading standards both at time of harvest and one year after harvest by providing timely and relevant insights to help our regulated handlers improve their farm-to-bottle operations. (STANDARDS)
- 5) Within the next four years, secure an improved California olive oil standard in the California Health & Safety Code that secures California EVOO’s reputation for quality and enhances the competitiveness of the state industry within the marketplace. (STANDARDS)
- 6) Over the next four years, encourage plantings to produce high quality California extra virgin olive oil through messaging that conveys the benefits of growing olives for olive oil to the farming community (OUTREACH).

Grade and Labeling Standards Committee (Standards Committee)

Purpose: The Grades and Labeling Standards Committee shall evaluate and recommend to the Commission actions and projects to establish and maintain grades and labeling standards for olive oil produced in California. The Grades and Labeling Standards Committee shall also advise on actions and communications with regulators, industry, and consumers to identify matters that affect the grading and labeling standards of olive oil produced in California, including enforcement of such standards.

Standards Committee Strategies:

- 1) Refine & modernize the Commission-led mandatory producer/handler testing program to enhance technical and practical information shared back with the handlers and OCCC in a timelier way.
- 2) Improve OCCC handler identification and compliance with testing and reporting required by the OCCC.
- 3) Fund annual off the shelf testing in retail and foodservice of Commission regulated extra virgin olive oils to determine compliance with quality and grade labeling. Provide data and professional expertise to known handlers about the performance of their oils.
- 4) [Within the parameters allowed by Commission law] Initiate a Legislative or regulatory proposal to update the California Health and Safety Code using the OCCC Grade and Labeling Standards as reference point.
- 5) Continue to be a source of data and documentation to support updates and revisions to the OCCC Grade and Labeling standards in applicable California law.

Research Committee

Purpose: The Research Committee shall evaluate research projects and review and recommend budgets for the projects to the Commission. Research may include, but shall not be limited to, olive tree cultivation, harvest, processing, and storage of olive oil. The Research Committee shall also monitor the activities of any approved research project, the timely reporting of research information, and proper expenditure of budgeted research funds.

1. Collect annual production/variety/acreage data through annual surveys or audit of available information.

- Collect orchard background data:
 - Planting date
 - Planted acres by variety
 - Varieties
 - Spacing and tree/acre
- Yearly production Data:
 - Tons/acre by variety
 - Gallons of OO per ton by variety
 - Gallons per acre by variety

2. Evaluate and fund research on Orchard Management including but not limited to the following areas:

- Canopy Management
- Irrigation
- Olive knot
- Other orchard management priorities: nutrition, healthy soils initiative, survey of diseases, new product registration, farm advisor engagement

3. Fund processing research/studies around waste product utilization and or disposal

- Highest and best use of olive oil waste products
- Human food/Animal Food/Other Products/Compost

4. Develop a guide that outlines the best growing, harvesting and handling practices, including fruit analytical measurement parameters to improve fruit and oil quality.

OOCC Outreach Committee

Purpose: The Outreach Committee shall provide recommended guidance to the commission on topics and tools to reach the commissions target audience.

Objective:

The primary objectives of the OOCC Outreach program are to raise awareness about the work of the OOCC and encourage increased olive plantings to produce high quality California olive oil.

Target Audiences (in order of priority):

1. Grower and Handler Members of the OOCC
2. California olive oil industry
3. General California farming community

Messages communicated will focus on the following:

- OOCC Board Actions and Policies
- Events and Issues of Concern to Olive Producers
- Results of the OOCC's Mandatory Testing and Sampling Program
- Research on Olive Oil Production
- Best practices for growing olive oil in California
- Information and data on the benefits of growing olive oil in California
- Sustainability factors of olive oil farming
- Other activities of the OOCC as needed.

Strategies:

1. Bring communications in-house under the direction of OOCC management.
2. Expand existing database of OOCC growers, olive oil industry members and the general California agricultural community.
3. Utilize newsletters, website, special bulletins, press releases, workshops and industry meetings to communicate with target audiences.
4. Work with news outlets and agricultural trade publications to share OOCC messaging with target audiences.
5. Regularly disseminate information to target audiences on OOCC-funded research and findings.
6. Provide information on the OOCC Grade and Labeling Standards program including updates to the standards, off-the-shelf survey and results of the mandatory sampling and testing program.
7. Publicize an annual list of OOCC Members in Good Standing.
8. Encourage voluntary participation in the OOCC among smaller growers.
9. Share updates on board actions and general OOCC activities with the OOCC membership.
10. Conduct special outreach activities as needed under the direction of the OOCC Executive Committee.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall have final decision-making authority with respect to personnel, litigation, and government matters, subject to ratification by the Commission, and on other matters expressly delegated by the Commission. The Executive Committee may also act on behalf of the Commission in other situations under circumstances where action is of an urgent nature and necessary prior to the next meeting of the Commission. Such action shall not result in expenditures more than \$25,000.00 and shall be reported to the Commission at the next meeting of the Commission.

The executive committee shall operate timely, effectively, and transparently.

Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee shall establish detailed and specific procedures for the disbursement of Commission funds, including procedures for the acquisition of property, the signing of checks, purchase orders, and other similar matters. The Budget and Finance Committee shall also formulate an annual budget for approval by the Commission and concurrence of the Secretary, as well as reserve and cash-flow requirements; recommend investment programs for Commission funds; supervise the preparation of financial reports which shall be made available to the Commission on a periodic basis; and do all things necessary and proper to insure accurate financial records. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Commission shall serve as chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee.

The budget and finance committee shall review the budget and financial reports for the commission on an annual basis and provide direction on annual budget forecasts and expenditures.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Secretary from applications received from persons that produce or cause to be produced olives that are processed into less than 5,000 gallons of olive oil during the marketing season. The Advisory Committee shall meet periodically to review issues affecting the Commission and shall advise the Commission Board of Directors. The Advisory Committee shall consist of seven members who shall each serve three-year terms.

The advisory committee shall meet at least twice a year and recommend to the commission projects, issues or initiatives that are priority items for all producers of olive oil.

Objective: Ensure the commission stays in touch with issues impacting producers less than 5000 gallons.

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: OLIVE OIL COMMISSION OF CALIFORNIA

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BACKGROUND: In 2024, the OOCB Board of Directors had conversations about revisiting and adjusting the standard of olive oil. OOCB staff and KSC worked on legislative language to allow for the grade standards to be determined by CDFA, as recommended by the commission, rather than US Federal Standards. There were three primary buckets in this legislative language.

- 1. HSC Section 113877: Olive oil grades**
 - a. "...quality, purity, labeling standards for extra virgin olive oil are otherwise established by the Department of Food and Agriculture in the 'Grade and Labeling Standards for Olive Oil, Refined-Olive Oil, and Olive-Pomace Oil...'"
- 2. Adjusts the Commission's Marketing Year for Budgeting Consistency: January 1 to December 31**
 - a. Current marketing year is July 1 to June 30
- 3. Add to the Powers and Duties Article to allow the commission to conduct olive oil data collection**
 - a. Market price and volume information based on prices paid by handlers to producers by region and by variety

Previous Timeline

October 2025: OOCB staff and KSC looked at initial steps for the authority of the commission to set the standard. In October, KSC began to draft a proposal and provide an estimated monthly retainer of \$6,000.

December 16, 2025, Board of Directors Meeting: After reviewing the timeline and olive oil legislative language, the board decided to schedule another meeting after the holidays to take a formal vote.

January 14, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting: The board voted to table the standards law proposal and recommended that the OOCB Grade and Standards Committee review this legislative effort.

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ANNUAL SAMPLING PROGRAM UPDATE

BACKGROUND:

A total of 18 mills submitted data to the OOC this season, with 12 mills exceeding the 5,000-gallon threshold and qualifying for CDFA random sampling. A total of **4.29 million gallons** of olive oil were reported to the OOC this season, compared to 3.66 million gallons reported last season, representing a significant increase in reported volume. All scheduled CDFA sampling has been completed, and all collected olive oil samples have been sent to the laboratories for chemical and sensory evaluation.

Steps Remaining:

1. Submit all finalized testing data to UC Davis by March 15.
2. Distribute testing results to mills as they become available.
3. UC Davis to complete the Final Annual Sampling Program Report (target completion date: May 15).

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: OOCC GRADES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON OOCC LAB ACCREDITATION WEBSITE PAGE

BACKGROUND:

At the request of the Board of Directors, the OOCC has added an Accredited Laboratories page to the website identifying U.S.-based, fee-for-service laboratories that hold IOC or AOCS accreditation specifically aligned with OOCC quality and purity standards. The list was developed to ensure handlers and voluntary members have clear guidance on laboratories qualified to perform the required chemical and sensory analyses.

As part of the sampling program revisions, the OOCC also updated its policy so the Commission will no longer cover sampling costs for voluntary members. Voluntary members seeking Members in Good Standing status must now utilize an accredited laboratory listed on the OOCC website and submit their testing results directly to the OOCC.

Visit the Accredited Laboratory page here: [Accredited Laboratory Directory](#)

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: 2026 OLIVE RING PRELIMINARY SUMMARY

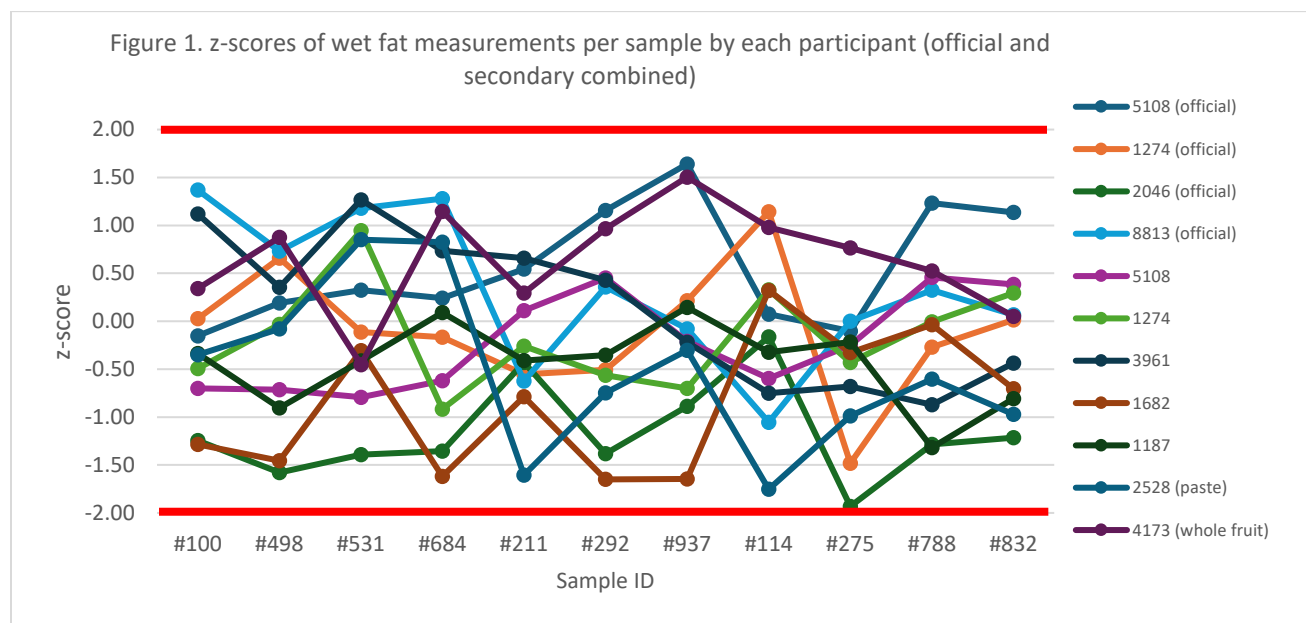
BACKGROUND:

The 2025/26 OOC Ring Test is nearing completion. Shirley from UC Davis will provide a preliminary summary of this season's ring test, including participation and overall performance observations. The following pages contain the 2026 Preliminary Ring Test Summary.

 Labs in Good Standing

In the 2025/26 season, a total of 11 olive samples were analyzed over three testing rounds. **80%** of the official method labs (4 out of 5), and **87.5%** of secondary method (NIR) labs (7 out of 8) are considered in good standing (one laboratory conducted secondary method on both whole fruit and olive paste and was therefore counted as two separate participants). Both groups demonstrated improved passing rates compared to the 2024/25 season. ***These are labs that fully participated and aligned on the ring test as repeatable and accurate results and completed the testing in its entirety.***

Official Method	Secondary Method (NIR)
California Olive Ranch	California Olive Ranch
Modern Olives Laboratory	Modern Olives Laboratory
UC Food Quality Laboratory	Corto Olive Company
Eurofins Food Chemistry Testing Des Moines, Inc.	G&S Milling
	The Mill at Kings River, LLC
	Eurofins QTA, Inc.



Samples 100, 498, 531, and 684 were expected to have wet fat below 10%; samples 211, 292, and 937 between 10-15%; and samples 114, 275, 788, and 832 above 15% at near-harvest maturity. Figure 1 shows how much each lab’s results differ from the average for the same batch of samples. Most labs fall within ± 1.5 z-score of the assigned value, demonstrating strong inter-laboratory agreement. Overall performance remains acceptable; however, continued monitoring is important to prevent potential impacts on grower payments.

 What is the Z score?

Z score is the measurement used in ring tests to evaluate labs **accuracy** to the other participants. This statistical parameter is widely used for most accreditations such as American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS) and Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC).

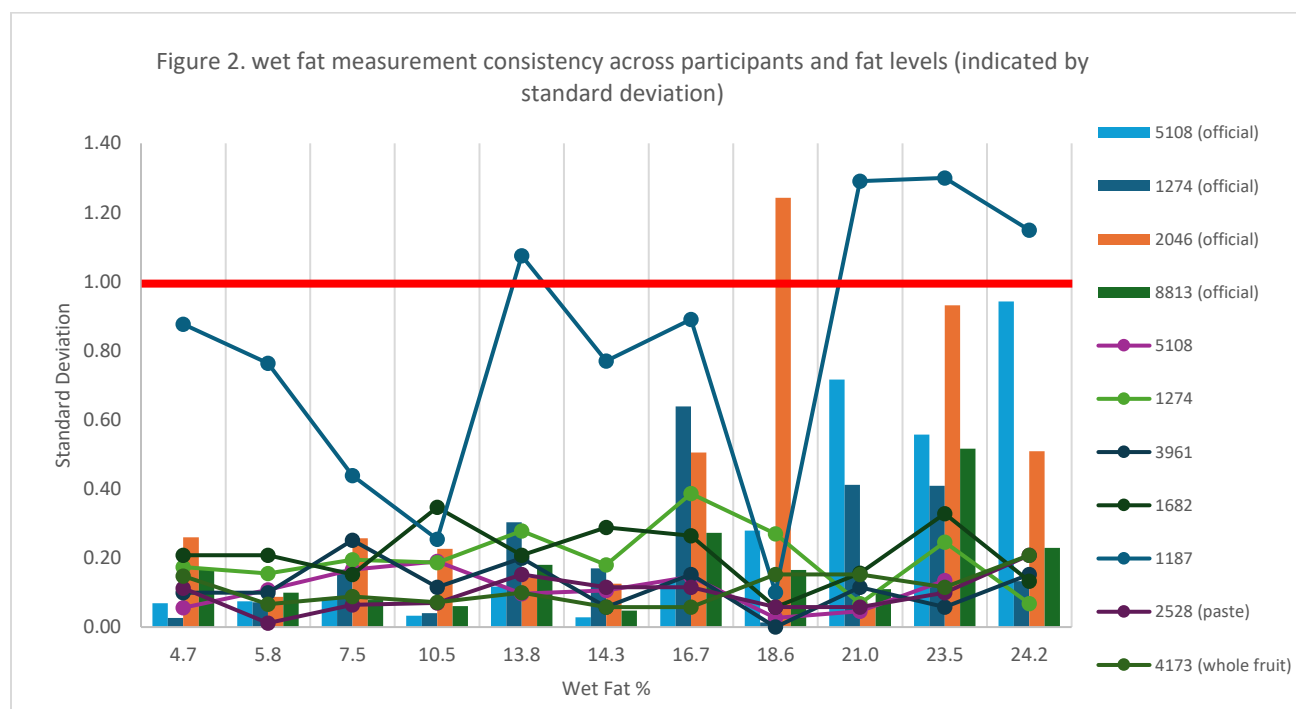
Steps Away from the Average: The Z-score tells you how many "steps" you are away from that average line. Each "step" is a standard size, called a **standard deviation (SD)**. The further you are from the line the less precise/accurate you are. Anything with a z-score > 2.0 would be considered not in alignment. The goal is to have z-score as close to 0.



Measurement Variance

Figure 2 shows wet fat measurement consistency (standard deviation of triplicates) across fat levels. Most labs maintained low variability (SD < 0.5), indicating strong within-lab repeatability. A few elevated SD values were observed at higher fat levels, particularly for Lab 2046 (official) and Lab 1187 (secondary NIR), suggesting sample-specific variability rather than systematic bias.

Overall performance remains acceptable. Continued standardization and routine monitoring are important to ensure reliable measurements and fair grower payment determinations.



What does Standard Deviation mean?

Standard deviation reflects the variability of a lab’s results across repeated measurements, which reflects the lab’s measurement **precision**. For example, if a lab reports an average wet fat content of 19% with a standard deviation of 1%, then most results are expected to fall within 18–20% (± 1 SD), assuming normal distribution.

Many olive growers in California are paid based on wet fat%, so a 1% difference in test results can mean real money lost or gained. The good news is that most labs now produce consistent and reliable results on olive wet fat%, supporting fair and accurate grower payment.

*****ACTION REQUIRED*****

FROM: GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: DECISION TREE DOCUMENT

RECOMMENDATION: THAT the Grades and Standards Committee Approve the Newly Revised Decision Tree Document.

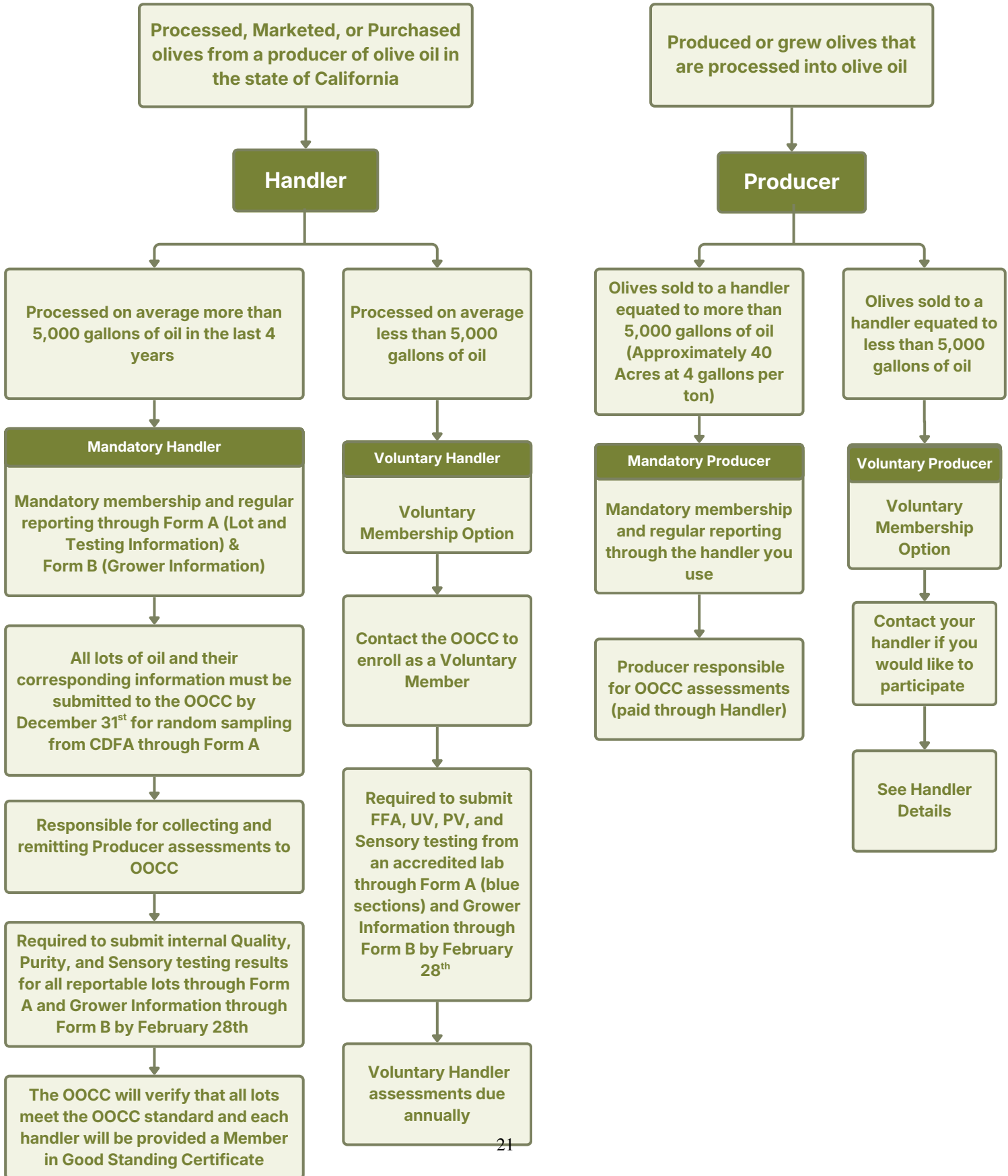
BACKGROUND:

As of January 1, 2026, the new law expanding the scope of the Commission to include toll processing has gone into effect. The upcoming season will be the first year of enforcement. In preparation, the Committee has revisited the previously presented decision tree to clarify how toll processors fall under Commission requirements before formal notices are issued. The goal is to make the document as clear and straightforward as possible.

The following pages contain the Decision Tree documents.



DETERMINING HANDLER OR PRODUCER STATUS FOR THE OCCC





DETERMINING OOC MEMBERSHIP STATUS AS A TOLL-PROCESSOR

Toll-processed more than 5,000 gallons of oil on average over the last 4 years for any one producer. Although you may not own the olives or oil, you are considered the first Handler converting olives to oil and are therefore the Mandatory Handler for OOC reporting

Mandatory OOC Handler Member

OOC as a Mandatory Member under the law effective January 1, 2026, and pay annual assessments

Responsible for collecting and remitting Producer assessments to OOC

Must submit a Preliminary Form A listing all lots toll-processed at your facility (grower-owned or otherwise) to the OOC by December 31st of each year, regardless of whether they remain in your possession

Must ensure all oil quality data is reported to the OOC, either by submitting it themselves or by coordinating with their Producer partners on who will complete and cover the required testing. Testing must be completed by an accredited lab

January 15th, the OOC will request a list of lots that remain in your physical possession at this time for CDFA random sampling.

February 28th Final Forms A & B are due to the OOC with all internal sampling results for each lot of olive oil and all grower information requested on the form

Once the OOC receives your internal sampling results from an accredited laboratory and verifies that the oil meets the OOC standard, the commission will provide you with a Member in Good Standing Certificate

Toll-Processed less than 5,000 gallons of oil on average (Approximately 40 Acres at 4 gallons per ton)

Voluntary OOC Member

May join OOC as a Voluntary Member.

Must submit a Preliminary Form A listing all lots toll-processed (grower-owned or otherwise) that are in your possession to the OOC by December 31st of each year.

Must ensure FFA, UV, PV, and Sensory testing data is reported to the OOC, either by submitting it themselves or by coordinating with their Producer partners to determine who will complete and cover the required testing. Testing must be completed by an accredited lab.

CDFA does not sample voluntary members, instead the OOC will require all internal sampling to be conducted and submitted by February 28th.

Once the OOC receives your internal sampling results and verifies that they are results from an accredited laboratory and the lots of Olive Oil meet the standard, the OOC will provide you with a Member in Good Standing Certificate

*****INFORMATION ONLY*****

FROM: GRADE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: TOLL PROCESSING OUTREACH PLAN

BACKGROUND:

The OOC has determined that the 2026–2027 harvest season will be the appropriate time to begin enforcing the new law encompassing toll processors. This timeline allows the Commission time to finalize guidelines and develop a strategic outreach plan to ensure industry awareness and compliance. The following outreach opportunities have been identified as initial next steps:

1. Obtain Board of Directors approval and dispersion of the Toll Processing Decision Tree document.
2. Develop a one-page informational handout for distribution at the Annual Olive Oil Conference outlining the new enforcement structure and what to expect next season.
3. Begin announcements in the OOC newsletter regarding the new law going into effect.
4. Work with handlers to obtain toll processing contacts to compile a comprehensive outreach list and conduct direct outreach prior to next season.
5. Issue an industry-wide announcement outlining requirements and timelines.