

Olive Oil from Trigono-Lamda

100 Litres of oil were harvested from the Lamda and Delta groves and transferred by freight carrier to the UK in December 2010. This is the amount allowed without possession of a licence. I am carrying out a feasibility exercise to determine whether to import commercially. In a good year, the Lamda and delta groves can yield 800 litres fine quality oil, while in low years we might expect about 100 litres. If I imported I would consider supplementing during the low years with oils purchased from nearby groves to maintain a constant supply.

FAQs

Is this Virgin Olive Oil? - The oil has an acidity level of around 0.3%, this is well within the 0.8% acidity limit under which oil is considered to be virgin olive oil.

Is it Extra Virgin Olive oil? - The oil was produced from the first (and only) pressing using modern equipment. As the oil has not been tested using the latest technique to prove that it is virgin olive oil, we cannot give it this classification. However, under traditional terms, it would be. The oil is from a single source and not mixed with other oils.

How important are flavour and colour? This is a matter of preference; however, superior oils have fuller flavour and richer colour. These vary with olive variety, soil conditions, climate and processing time. The 2010 Lamda and Delta oil has a strong green tint and flavour.

How quickly was processing following harvest? Processing must take place within about 3 days of harvest as the quality of the oil deteriorates significantly as time passes. The 2010 crop was processed within a few hours of harvesting and total harvesting time was 1.5 days. This has ensured high quality oil.

How can we be sure of the facts? As owner of the groves, I travel to Greece for harvesting each year and use the same team and time period. I am present throughout the processing so that I can check the sacks into the hopper observe the process and receive the required documentation showing date, time, premises, yield and sales information. Each batch is processed separately and the owner can check that the processing tanks are empty between batches.

What is the time-span between leaving the factory and bottling? The oil was processed on December 4th, and collected from the factory on December 5th. It had arrived in the UK by December 29th and was bottled on January 15th-16th.

Can you show me the process at the factory? Yes. I have put photos of the olive harvest for 2008 on the website. In 2010 we used a new factory which uses more enclosed stainless steel machinery. This makes the process more difficult to observe, and there are no photos, however the equipment complies with modern health and safety requirements and the basic process is the same.

Why have you used plastic bottles? I have used new, food-grade PET bottles and am allowing time for settling before bottling to minimise sediment. The plastic bottles are lighter weight and less liable to break than glass. Olive oil keeps better in a darker bottle, however research shows that consumers prefer to see the bottle contents when purchasing.

Is there legislation on the labelling of olive oil? Yes; DEFRA is the UK government department concerned and we have undertaken preliminary research on bottling and labelling. Although I am not a commercial bottler I am following requirements as closely as possible to determine the feasibility of commercial production. Labels for the 500 ml bottles were designed and ordered in January 2011 and special labels for 187 ml presentation bottles were ordered in February.

Can I buy olive oil from Trigono-Lamda? Large scale Commercial production is not feasible for Trigono-Lamda which consists of only 100 trees. Until 2010 I was unable to justify the cost of importing even a small quantity of olive oil to the UK but costs of maintaining the groves continue to rise and the price paid by merchants who bulk buy mixed oil has fallen. The feasibility study so far indicates a price of £6.00 per 500 ml bottle and £3.00 per 187ml bottle.