



# New Botanical Adulterants Prevention Bulletin Reviews Evidence of Olive Oil Adulteration and Fraud

*Publication summarizes data on economically motivated substitution of olive oils with undeclared other vegetable oils or lower-grade olive oils*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, January 10, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program (BAPP) announces the publication of a new Botanical Adulterants Prevention Bulletin (BAPB) on olive (*Olea europaea*) oil.

The oil of the olive fruit is one of the most popular vegetable oils for culinary use. In dietary supplements, olive oil is used as a carrier oil, or excipient, for fat-soluble vitamins, saw palmetto berry extract, and as a dietary ingredient alone or in combination with fish, flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), borage (*Borago officinalis*), and other oils to supply balanced amounts of fatty acids to the human diet. Olive oil is also a popular ingredient in topical formulations such as lotions, creams, ointments, and lip balms. Global production of olive oil depends on weather conditions but has averaged more than three million metric tons for the past two years.

Olive oil adulteration is listed frequently among the most common food frauds worldwide. In 2014 The New York Times published an online slide show of infographics to explain the problem in simplified terms.<sup>1</sup> The fraud includes mainly substitution with lower-cost vegetable oils, lower-grade olive oils such as refined olive oil or pomace oil (the pomace is the solid material remaining after pressing the fruit to remove the oil), and inaccurate country-of-origin labeling. This appears to be a continuing problem according to several articles published over the last decade, many of which are referenced in the new bulletin.

The new bulletin was written by Rodney J. Mailer, PhD, an expert in vegetable oil production and analysis and former head of the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries' edible oil research program in Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia, and Stefan Gafner, PhD, American Botanical Council (ABC) chief science officer and the technical director of BAPP. It defines the various olive oil grades, lists known adulterants, summarizes current analytical approaches to detect adulterants, and provides information on the supply chain, pricing, and market importance of olive oil. The olive oil bulletin was reviewed by 14 experts from the nonprofit research sector, consulting businesses, contract analytical laboratories, and the vegetable oil, dietary supplement, and cosmetic industries in the United States and other countries.

Gafner commented: "While the adulteration of olive oil has been widely known for many years, we were initially uncertain whether to embark on writing an olive oil bulletin, since it is not normally considered a primary dietary ingredient in the dietary supplement industry. However, due to olive oil's widespread use as an excipient in the dietary supplement industry and as a significant ingredient in the cosmetic and personal care industries, and its high frequency of adulteration, we concluded that this document will benefit many industry members, and eventually, hopefully, consumers."

Mark Blumenthal, founder and executive director of ABC and BAPP, elaborated on Gafner's statement: "It is important to realize that the scope of BAPP, as well as ABC and our partners at the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP) and the National Center for Natural Products

Research at the University of Mississippi (NCNPR), goes beyond the use of botanical ingredients in dietary supplements. We research and publish on botanicals and botanical ingredients used in conventional foods, cosmetics, and even pharmaceutical drugs. Seen from this purview, the widespread adulteration of olive oil, a historically noted practice in commerce, is a long overdue subject for BAPP's research and publications."

The olive oil bulletin is the 20th publication in the series of BAPBs and the 56th peer-reviewed publication of BAPP. BAPP also is producing a Laboratory Guidance Document that will review and evaluate laboratory analytical methods to authenticate olive oil. As with all the program's publications, the BAPBs are freely accessible to all ABC members, registered users of the ABC website, and all members of the public on the program's website (registration required).

#### Reference

1. Blechman N. Extra virgin suicide – the adulteration of Italian olive oil. The New York Times. January 24, 2014. Available at: [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/01/24/opinion/food-chains-extra-virgin-suicide.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/01/24/opinion/food-chains-extra-virgin-suicide.html). Accessed December 11, 2019.

#### [About the ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program](#)

The ABC-AHP (American Herbal Pharmacopoeia)-NCNPR (National Center for Natural Products Research at the University of Mississippi) Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program is an international consortium of nonprofit professional organizations, analytical laboratories, research centers, industry trade associations, industry members, and other parties with interest in herbs and medicinal plants. The program advises industry, researchers, health professionals, government agencies, the media, and the public about various challenges related to adulterated botanical ingredients sold in commerce. To date, more than 200 United States and international parties have financially supported or otherwise endorsed the program.

The program has published 56 extensively peer-reviewed articles, including Botanical Adulterants Prevention Bulletins, Laboratory Guidance Documents, and Botanical Adulterants Monitor e-newsletters.

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