



Certification of sustainability: new frontier of extra-virgin olive oil

The TAICHI project promoted by CNO, UNAPOL and UNASCO highlights a new opportunity to further enhance quality production in olive oil industry.

Sustainability is a conscious and responsible approach that can be applied in all fields, including the food industry. Adopting a sustainable diet means consuming healthy and eco-friendly food, produced with respect for the environment, land consumption, biodiversity, and low carbon footprint.

With the **TAICHI** project, the major Italian olive oil players, CNO, UNAPOL and UNASCO intend to promote olive oil culture that highlights sustainability, quality, transparency and consumer protection against any attempt of fraud. According to the three associations, these aspects are especially important for Chinese and Taiwanese consumers, who, despite recent scandals in the food safety sector, are willing to buy extra virgin olive oil as long as it meets the highest quality and transparency standards.

In this regard, a new challenge for European olive oil production companies could be the achievement of a Sustainability Certification for extra virgin olive oil. The Sustainability Certification takes into account environmental, social and economic aspects (such as fair price, generation and distribution of wealth, profitability, efficiency), as well as nutritional aspects. It helps the consumers identify olive oil with specific merchandise, nutritional and health parameters.

Italian company Oleificio Zucchi has been the first to obtain the Certification of Sustainability for its extra virgin olive oil, starting the first sustainable supply chain of Italian olive oil. Both companies in the olive oil sector and related institutions are moving towards product sustainability at different levels. The European legislative guidelines encourage:

- greater respect and protection of the environment, reducing technological inputs connected to the production process;
- a greater work safety awareness, with particular regard to the use of machines and new technologies;
- an increase in energy savings, using innovations in the field of renewable energy with a consequent reduction in carbon emissions;
- waste reduction by recycling, appropriate disposing or creating energy from waste sources;
- greater respect for work with fair economic recognition.



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