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California Olive Oil Council's 2016 Harvest Production Estimated at 3.5 Million Gallons

California Department of Food and Agriculture Awards Third Sequential Specialty Crop Block Grant to the COOC as Vigorous Industry Growth Continues

Berkeley, Calif., December 12, 2016- As the 2016 harvest winds down, the California Olive Oil Council (COOC), established in 1992, estimates the total extra virgin olive oil production for California at 3.5 million gallons. The industry, with its formidable growth, now provides 5.8% of all olive oil consumed in the United States and is on track to see a sizeable increase in 2017. A few short years ago, California extra virgin olive oil made up just 1% of the market. The United States, after the European Union, is the largest consumer of olive oil in the world.

In order to continue its work advancing the market share of California extra virgin olive oil within the United States, the COOC was recently awarded its third sequential Specialty Crop Block Grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) in the amount of \$ 357,000. This funding will continue the role of the COOC as the leader in the American olive oil industry with its innovative educational and marketing programs and strict adherence to standards.

"The COOC and the California olive oil industry are very grateful to the CDFA for their support in providing this specialty crop funding. The award will strengthen California agriculture overall by building partnerships that will advance the immense importance of both the olive oil segment and the overall agricultural community," said Patricia Darragh, executive director of the California Olive Oil Council. "Leveraging the California Grown identity along with other partnerships will provide a cornerstone of growth and recognition for the olive oil industry boosting the sales of California certified extra virgin olive oil along with other California agricultural specialty products"

The hallmark of the COOC is its Seal Certification Program, which was established in 1998. The program provides assurances to retailers and consumers that the olive oils in the program have met the COOC's exacting standards for extra virgin olive oil grade. Each year, the mandatory program requires that all grower/producer members submit their oils to the program ensuring high quality, traceability and transparency.

For more information on the CDFA 2016 awards, view the CDFA press release:
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/Press_Releases/Press_Release.asp?PRnum=16-042

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The COOC (www.cooc.com) is a trade association with the mission of encouraging the consumption of certified California extra virgin olive oil through education, outreach and communications. The COOC is committed to upholding the highest standards within the olive oil industry through its Seal Certification Program. The COOC has over 400 members including growers and producers, service providers, retailers and other supporters of the California olive oil industry. The COOC represents over 90% of all olive oil production in California and the state produces over 99% of the olive oil in the United States.