



THIS FAX IS ONE (1) PAGE

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FAX MESSAGE FOR: Rep. Ted Yoho FX: (202) 225-3973
 Attn: Larry Calhoun larry.calhoun@mail.house.gov

We understand the 2013 Farm Bill will include a provision addressing quality of imported olive oil; the Florida Olive Council urges you to **support** this provision.

The U.S. imported ninety-eight percent (98%) of the 85 million gallons of olive oil (1 qt./person) we consumed last year; a 6% year-over-year market growth (butter was 1%). However, while the U.S. market is expanding, domestic olive oil producers (2% market share) are not able to fairly compete. They are constrained by 40% EU cost-of-production subsidies and documented fraud by some importers and bottlers. Domestic producers believe their proximity to the market and quality of product will permit them to expand if they can have a level playing field. The current Farm Bill offers that opportunity.

Once fully effective, the olive oil provision in the Farm Bill will require U.S. importers to ensure the oil they are selling adheres to the USDA standard for quality. (U.S. oil exported to the EU must comply with a similar regulation). Under USDA and USTR guidelines, the regulation will only come into effect if 100% of U.S. producers participate in a domestic marketing order. The U.S. olive oil producers are willing to be held to the same standard as foreign producers and; to avoid any inconvenience for U.S. importers, permit oil to be tested prior to shipment to the U.S.

Florida has more than 35 active olive growers (several in **North Florida**) with three new commercial groves installed state-wide this year and several more under construction for 2013. UF-IFAS is gathering information on olives to support citrus growers searching for alternate crops in the wake of fatal greening disease costing the state \$4B and 6,000 jobs since 2006. We expect the Florida market for olive oil to grow significantly over the next 10 years and growers need a level playing field to fairly compete.

The Florida Olive Council urges you to support the olive oil provision in the 2013 Farm Bill and to contact other Members of the Florida delegation and urge them to vote **against** any effort to block passage of the provision.

Sincerely,

END OF MESSAGE