



OILIVE OIL – AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FOOD. EXTRA VIRGIN HAS USEFUL INFORMATION ON THE LABEL

Rome – Olive oil fears no rivals when it comes to ecologically sound food products. “A serious olive oil is obtained simply from cold pressing, because the olive is the only fruit that has an oil-bearing chamber: just squeeze and you obtain oil,” says **Ciro Vestita**, a nutritionist. “Many oil seeds require a different procedure. If, for example, I squeeze soy beans, I’ll end up with a mush; to extract oil from them I have to use a hydrocarbon called hexane, which is a quite different technique. Furthermore, once it has been obtained from cold mechanical pressing, real olive oil does not require decolouration, rectification or heating, as is frequently the case with seed oils.”

A question of labelling – The nutritional and therapeutic qualities of olive oil are found only in the good quality product. Returning to the Ixè survey, we find the propensity to buy is good (75%), and an absolute majority of consumers say they are not/would not be put off buying the best quality by questions of price. But it is not always easy to find the right product. The first rule is to rely on the label, but only 60% of European consumers habitually pay attention to it. What’s more, the indications are often seen as difficult to understand, if not outright misleading. It’s indicative, when it comes to the problem of “Italian sounding”, that as many as 59% of European consumers say they believe they are getting a product of Italian origin if the label bears an Italian name or logo. To appreciate just how much difficult-to-understand labels can affect the reputation of olive oil, 99% of consumers consider it a fraud when Italian brands of extra virgin olive oil are made from olives not sourced in Italy.

Rome, 6 December 2016



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