

Il Direttore Generale

Rome, 9 January 2014

Dear Mrs. Butler,

as you know the problem in Taiwan started when they found local oil producers putting cottonseed oil in bottles labeled as “sunflower”, “grape seed” or “olive” oil.

This fraud could have sanitary implication and I understand the reasons of the scandal in the media in Taiwan and TFDA’s concern.

In such a contest, the addition of flavors and copper chlorophyllin made in some case by the Taiwanese producers was a corollary of the fraud, because they were necessary to give to cottonseed oil the appearance of grape seed or olive oil; this addition is without sanitary implications, because flavors and copper chlorophyllin are safely used in other food products.

In any case, it is clear that in Taiwan, in European Union and in Italy it is forbidden to add flavors and colors to edible oils.

According to the information received from Taipei, TFDA controlled widely olive oils, olive pomace oils and grape seed oils coming from Italy and the conclusions of the controls didn’t put in discussion that they were really olive, olive pomace or grape seed oils.

Only in some cases of olive pomace and grape seed oils, they found a small peak indicating the possible presence of traces of copper chlorophyllin.

Unhappily TFDA didn’t give us more information and we had to start a scientific research on the case and a scientific research takes time.

Mrs. Julie Butler
Olive Oil Times contributor
Barcelona, Spain



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The first conclusions are that the analytical method was developed in Europe, but it is used in Taiwan in a different way and on different products, and this originates problems of interpretation of the results, and that crude olive pomace and grape seed oils contain naturally a lot of chlorophyll, coming from the olives and the grape seeds, and traces of copper salts, used by the farmers before harvesting, and that chlorophyll and copper could combine to form copper pirophosphates (a sort of copper chlorophyllin) during the processing of the oils.

Using the analytical method like in Taiwan, our expert too can see the small peak in some crude olive pomace and grape seed oil; this peak is partially removed during refining and totally removed when refining is done in very strong conditions, but this is not legally possible for olive pomace oil.

Now the first conclusion of our experts is that the presence of traces of copper chlorophyllin, if confirmed, is natural in the oils and I think that because it is natural and without toxicological consequences it should be admitted.

From Taiwan I was informed that TFDA didn't agree, because not only the addition, but also the presence of copper chlorophyllin is considered illegal, but I think there was a misunderstanding of our people in Taipei, because this is unreasonable and should bring to forbid carrots, because they contain (the color) beta-carotene!

I think it will be useful a direct discussion between our technical experts and TFDA and I hope to have this discussion in a short time.

Having nothing to hide, we are very open to show to Taiwanese Authorities that our oils are pure and the nutritional advantages of olive, olive pomace and grape seed oil are so known that it is not a small peak that could change the reality!

(Claudio Ranzani)