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SAFOI

n e w s l e t t e r

EDITORIAL

During the past six months SAFOI has had the first legal success in the Olive Oil scandal. We are very proud of this successful prosecution and conviction, the first in the South African food industry. Read more about this exciting development in this issue. As always, our objectives are:

SAFOI OBJECTIVES

To terminate the consumption of unhealthy abused oils and fats especially by our poor communities.

To develop and promote effective oil waste management procedures.

To terminate misrepresentation practices.

To promote the Steward's Principle.

The following progress was made in various aspects of our set objectives.

1. FRYING OIL & FAT ANALYSIS

Our analytical section steered by Dr. Carlien Pohl and Mrs. Andri Van Wyk has analyzed various frying oil samples from the Department of Health and different industries.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Table 1 Quality of used frying oils and fats since December 2008. The percentage of samples above South African regulatory limits based on polymerised triglycerides (PTG) is included.

Drawn by:	No. samples analysed	% Samples above PTG limits
Mpumalanga	2	0
Industry*	427	1.2
TOTAL	485	

*Many practicing the Steward's Principle

According to The Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act no. 54 of 1972) published on 16 August 1996 in S.A., oil is deemed to be harmful or injurious to human health, unless they contain less than 16% PTGs and/or 25% PCs.

The worst frying oil analysed over the past three months contained up to 36% polymerised triglycerides (PTGs).

Table 2 Quality of fresh unused palm oil since December 2008 (based on fatty acid composition).

Drawn by:	No. samples analysed	No. of samples not complying with Codex standards for palm oil
Industry	195	9
TOTAL	195	

Table 3 Quality of fresh unused sunflower oil since December 2008 (based on fatty acid composition).

Drawn by:	No. samples analysed	No. of samples not complying with Codex standards for sunflower oil
Industry	85	7
Carte Blanche	18	0
TOTAL	103	

Table 4 Quality of fresh unused olive oil since December 2008 (based on fatty acid composition).

Drawn by:	No. samples analysed	No. of samples not complying with Codex standards for olive oil
Industry	1	1
TOTAL	1	

2. OIL ANALYSES FOR INDUSTRY

Analyses were performed on various products for Rein Oils, Willowton, C & N Oil Trade, Felda Foods, Refill Oils, V-Oils, PSS Oils, Nola, Yum! Restaurants, Picola Foods, Vergezocht Oils, Epko, Pick & Pay, Inkoleko, Willowcreek olive oils and Energy Oils. We have also analysed 82 samples for the animal feed industry, including Afgri Animal Feeds and Meadows Animal Feeds. This service includes fatty acid profile analyses, determination of the moisture, impurities and free fatty acid content as well as the peroxide value. We would like to urge all members of the oil industry to use our services if there are any questions regarding the quality or authenticity of oil.

3. SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION IN THE OLIVE OIL SCANDAL

A successful conviction in the South African food industry for selling diluted olive oil under the guise of virgin olive oil was handed down in the Special Commercial Crimes Court in Durban on 23 March 2009. Prof. Lodewyk Kock and his SA Fryer Oil Initiative (SAFOI) team were involved in exposing this unlawful practice and recently collaborated with the police and prosecuting authority to achieve this outcome. It is the first successful conviction of this kind in the South African food industry and sends out a dire warning to all fraudsters in the food industry.

4. PUBLICATION

Included is an article that appeared in the Business Day (27/03/09) regarding the successful prosecution in the Olive Oil scandal.



SAFOI - SAKI

2009



GENUINE: Some South African olive oils now bear a seal of approval after being sent for independent testing. Picture: TERRY SHEAN

Courts take dim view of fraudulent food labels

More convictions may follow after diluted olive oil case

NICOLA MAWSON
Consumer Industries Correspondent

DRIZZLING virgin olive oil over a salad took a sour turn for many consumers eight years ago when it was uncovered that the olive oil was not so virgin, having been adulterated by other edible oils.

On Monday, one of the men responsible was fined R250 000, a fraction of the estimated profits from the scam.

But Guido Costa, then an executive member of the South African Olive Growers' Association, said yesterday the fine was not enough. He had estimated the damage to the industry at retail level at about R5m.

At least there are more prosecutions in the pipeline, he said. Now no longer on the committee, Costa's family owns seven olive farms.

He said he accompanied the commercial crimes unit on one raid during the investigation, and five more raids before the case finally got to court.

On Monday, the owner of Ital Distributors, Salvatore Pollizi, was convicted in the Special Commercial

Crimes Court in Durban of selling diluted olive oil under the guise of virgin olive oil named Antico Frantolio and Ulivo. He was sentenced to a fine of R250 000 or three years imprisonment of which R130 000 or 18 months is suspended for five years on condition he is not found guilty of fraud or theft or attempting to commit such crimes during the period of suspension.

Costa said he initially uncovered the swindle after buying olive oil that was claimed to have been bottled in Italy, but was in locally manufactured bottles and was far cheaper than it should have been.

He stated in his affidavit he had "established beyond doubt that the bottles, the caps and the labels were all of South African origin", even though the product purported to be "bottled and produced in Italy".

His suspicions that the oil was not what it purported to be were confirmed by University of the Free State (UFS) professor Lodewyk Kock. Testing showed that several different brands of oil had been diluted with sunflower oil.

Kock, who heads the South

African Fryer Oil Initiative, said as far as he knew, the conviction was the first of this kind in the South African food industry. He said Pollizi's guilty plea — when faced with the mountain of evidence — sent a "dire warning to all fraudsters in the food industry".

The case was prosecuted by Adv Joanna Bromley-Gans of the special commercial crime unit in Durban and investigated by Capt Pragasen Govender of the serious economic offences unit in Pretoria.

Bromley-Gans said the manner in which the case was investigated and prosecuted could lay the foundations for future prosecutions in the food industry in general.

Kock said that in 2003, some industry members had sent their oil products out for independent testing, and some oils now bear a seal of approval.

UFS said independent self-regulation had been welcomed by companies such as Nando's, Spur, Captain Dorego, King Pie Holdings, Fel-da Bridge Africa, Willowton Oil & Cake Mills, and Refill Oils.

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