

OliveCare® Risk Assurance Template – Safety and Quality Small Grower Version – Table Olives

Acknowledgement: To Olives Victoria for permission to use and adapt this document.

This template provides a statement of Risk Assurance for a **Small Olive Grower (SOG)** to the Australian Olive Association (AOA) to the effect that the table olives they produce are safe to consume and that the production process preserves the quality of the olives. This assurance is intended to meet the minimum requirements of the AOA Code of Practice (*OliveCare®*).

A Small Olive Grower:

- Has fewer than 5000 trees (<5,000 kg table olives) – Level 1 *OliveCare®* fees.
- Does not have paid employees.
- May employ contractors for specific tasks such as pruning, harvesting or processing.

Medium producers up to 50,000 kg table olives (Level 2 *OliveCare®*) may choose to base their assurance on this Risk Assurance document, but must show that they have taken careful and explicit steps to reflect the additional requirements of a larger and more complex organization.

For large producers of over 50,000 kg table olives (Level 3 *OliveCare®*) and growers who export (*OliveCare®* Export) it is expected they will adapt the comprehensive HACCP style food quality plan template for evoo production to take account of the additional requirements of a large and complex organizations, and for the management of risk related to export. This template is available on the [AOA website](#).

EVOO Templates:

A similar Risk Assurance template for evoo production and a comprehensive HACCP style food quality plan template for evoo production are also available on the [AOA website](#).

This Template – An approach to assurance for the SOG:

This document aims to make it as easy as possible for a SOG to provide the assurance required for compliance with *OliveCare®*, using check lists of possible risk areas to prompt responses from the SOG. No check list can ever be complete in every situation; each SOG should use care to identify all the significant risks in his or her production process, and to consult with experts where there is uncertainty.

It is the responsibility of the grower to edit this draft template into a final version which is true and correct for that grower. The completed document is a binding assurance to the AOA that the grower produces safe and good quality product.

Please use “~~strikethrough~~” to remove unwanted text; make it easy for the OliveCare® Administrator to see what has changed.

We also suggest that you convert your completed document to a pdf before sending it to the *OliveCare®* Administrator so that there is no uncertainty about its content.

Declaration by Small Olive Grower:

Contact Details:

Name – Owner or Joint Owners:

(The owner or owners are referred to as “We” in this declaration)

Trading Name:

AOA Membership Number:

OliveCare® Membership Number:

Address of Grove:

Address for Correspondence:

Email address:

Telephone:

Third Party Assurance Certification? *(Please circle):*

eg NASAA, BFA, ACO, HACCP, FreshCare, SQF Code, CODEX, WQA, Other_____

Activities: (Put X's in appropriate boxes; add other activities if necessary.

Write in O for Oral Assurance, W for Written (Recommended). See paragraph below)

Activity	Direct Responsibility	Contracted Out	Contractor Assurance O/W
Growing Olives			
Pruning			
Spraying			
Harvesting			
Transport of Olives to Processor			
Processing- Primary			
Processing - Secondary			
Storage of Bulk Table Olives			
Bottling and Packing			
Product Distribution			
Other?			

Declaration of Assurance by Contractors:

'We declare that we actively seek and obtain assurance from contractors carrying out activities for us that they comply with the standards required for safety and product quality in the same way that we would be required to comply if we carried out those activities ourselves. We have recorded how we obtain assurance in the table above.

Assurance by Activity:

A. Growing olives – including Planting Pruning and Spraying

1. Soil is free from contamination

'We declare that the soil of our grove is free of contamination in particular by, heavy metals or persistent chemicals which may be harmful to olive production or consumption. We have carried out the soil testing and/or examination of historical records required to give us confidence in this declaration.

2. Nursery stock is disease free

'We declare that all new planting material is sourced from disease free mother trees and / or from an accredited nursery.

3. Grove Diary: Withholding Periods and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)

'We maintain an olive grove diary which records the application of all material brought into the grove, and its source.

'We ensure that any chemicals we use have current on-label provisions, APVMA permits, or are covered by relevant state control of use legislation, and that we respect the withholding periods and MRLs.

'We actively consider and manage the risks of other material (e.g. irrigation water, imported mulch).

4. Active Management of Tree Health:

'We actively manage the health of our trees through careful fertilising, pruning and action against pests and diseases. Our objective is to build tree health and natural resistance so that chemical sprays are needed only infrequently.

5. Other Risks to Product Safety or Quality

'We have discussed the specific processes we use in our grove to grow olives, and have undertaken a Biological, Chemical and Physical Hazard Analysis and identified the following additional issues which require careful management to maintain product safety and quality:

<add risk issues and management solutions, or state "none identified">

B. Harvesting and Transport:

1. Keeping Olives Clean

'We make sure that all the surfaces which the olive touches on its way to processing are clean. In particular, we ensure that olives do not fall on the ground, and that catching frames, nets, crates and bins are all clean before harvested olives touch them. We are alert to risks from machinery such as contamination by hydraulic oil, or plasticisers from PVC hoses on equipment that may contaminate fruit. We are taking action to remove PVC components from spray equipment and equipment in contact with olives and olive products.

'We cover crates and bins with reflective canopies while they are being transported to reduce heat load and prevent road dust and bird dropping contamination, and we ensure that the load areas of the vehicles are clean.

2. Control of Picking:

'We inspect the trees in the grove before harvest. We mark clearly (e.g. with flagging tape) trees which are not to be picked because they have significant pest or disease damage. We also mark for separate picking trees (e.g. pollinators) of different varieties from the variety to be picked.

3. Keeping Olives Cool and Undamaged

'To ensure good oil quality, we aim to get the olives from tree to processor within 24 hours and to keep them cool during that time.

'Where there is a risk of delay we consider the use of cooling and also avoid, if possible, storing olives in full bins where the fruit at the bottom are crushed by fruit above. We consider storing the olives in ventilated bins or crates to limit damage and allow air flow.

4. Other Risks to Product Safety or Quality

'We have discussed the specific harvesting and transport processes we use in our grove, and have undertaken a Biological, Chemical and Physical Hazard Analysis and identified the following additional issues which require careful management to maintain product safety and quality:

<add risk issues and management solutions, or state "none identified">

C. Primary Processing – Natural Olives

1. Recording:

'We record table olive processing by our own machinery, or for us by a contractor as an activity in the Grove Diary (A.2.)

'We record the sources and descriptions of processing ingredients ensuring that they are fit for use in a food process.

2. Cleanliness: Undamaged Olives:

'We ensure that the olives delivered to the processor are:

1. Free of any contamination and disease.
2. Delivered to the processing plant in suitable containers.
3. Delivered in an acceptable condition.

'We respect the precautions detailed in section B.

'We de-leaf the olives and wash them with clean, potable water

'We clean the processing machinery after each day's processing, so that later batches are not contaminated by olive residues, and that cleaning solutions do not remain in the machinery.

3. Primary Processing Operation

'We have taken specific care to understand and ensure:

- Prompt receipt, unloading and storage of fruit at the processing plant
- Recording of deliveries, Assign a unique identifying batch code to assist with traceability – suggest taking a photograph of each batch
- Potable water supply is used for fruit washing - test the water quality at least once a year to ensure no chance of microbiological spoilage.
- Timely preparation of pickling brine and lactobacilli starter culture
- Clean and sanitize all processing vessels (drums and tanks) along with lids and seals.
- Sorting of olives - size graded / sorted to remove undersized, damaged, diseased or miss-shaped fruit, leaves, twigs and other extraneous material
- Olives are washed with potable water to remove dust and dirt before sealing in their pickling vessels.
- The pickling (de-bittering) process:
 - o Pickling vessels should be partly filled with brine so olives tipped into a vessel fall onto water rather than a solid surface to avoid bruising.
 - o The vessels need to be filled to ensure all air is excluded once the lid is fastened down.

- During the fermentation process excess Carbon Dioxide may need to be vented.
- Barrels will need to be marked to clearly identify the contents.
- A starter culture of lactobacilli may be introduced.
- During the pickling process the condition of the fruit and the brine physio-chemical parameters will need to be checked and results recorded. Any variations from the accepted norm will require adjustment to ensure product quality and food safety.
- 'We taste test each batch of table olives before it goes to storage.

4. Processing Safety:

'We have taken care to understand how to safely operate the unloading and processing equipment and wear necessary protection such as ear defenders.

5. Other Risks to Product Safety or Quality

We have discussed how the olives from our grove are processed, and have undertaken a Biological, Chemical and Physical Hazard Analysis and identified the following additional issues which require careful management to maintain product safety and quality:

<add risk issues and management solutions, or state "none identified">

Note: Detailed information on Primary Processing of both Natural and Treated Olives is provided in the OliveCare® HACCP style food quality plan template for table olives.

D. Post Production Processing

1. Bulk Pickled Olive Storage:

We note that *OliveCare*® Signatories are to provide as a minimum, evidence of testing for the following parameters in accordance with [“The Voluntary Industry Standard for Table Olives in Australia \(RIRDC 2012\)”](#):

Ref Section 3, Table 2: Physico-chemical characteristics of packing brine or juice after osmotic balance.

Ref Section 9 Microbiological criteria for table olives offered for retail sale to the public.

Note: All testing must be undertaken by a NATA accredited laboratory.

Table Olives - natural (unpasteurised):

- Minimum sodium chloride (NaCl): 6%
- Maximum pH: 4.3
- Microbiological Criteria - *Escherichia coli*: Not detectable (<3 cfu/g)
- Organoleptic: No major defects

‘We have taken specific care to understand that:

- Bulk olives may need to have the salt levels, pH or water levels adjusted
- Olives in bulk containers need to be inspected, tasted and tested to ensure their suitability for further processing
- Large containers will need to be split into manageable amounts for secondary processing and packaging.
- Undertake manual visual secondary sorting to cull sub-standard olives - as the de-bittering process tends to be uneven, some of the olives may be too soft for premium table olive use.
- There is a chance that some of the olives will not be even in colour. In the case of green olives that should not pose a problem, in the case of black olives some may need to be exposed to that air to allow them to darken by oxidation.
- Table olives in storage will lose quality, even if stored under the ideal conditions. The best quality olives and best storage conditions will slow down the natural degradation.
- Long term storage in plastic containers is not recommended due to the high chance of oxidation and of contamination by phthalates.

2. Secondary Processing:

'We understand that this is the process of taking olives that have been successfully de-bittered using one of the various techniques, then prepared ready for sale and preparing and packing the olives for sale and includes:

- Preparation of olives packed into brines and marinades.
- Aromatizing of the olives by adding herbs and spices.
- Heat dried olives.
- Salt dried olives.
- Sliced, crushed and pitted olives.
- Stuffed olives.
- Olives packed in oil.
- Pasteurizing olives in jars.
- Olives may be sold in large scale bulk containers – generally 200 L plastic barrels are used for commercial sales.
- Sales to the food and catering industry of plastic buckets of 20 L and 10 L.
- Retail sales comprising smaller plastic containers, glass or plastic jars, soft pack and vacuum packing.

3. Packaging:

'We understand that once the olives have been through the de-bittering process and are palatable, there are numerous options available for sale after secondary processing:

- Sale of sorted or unsorted olives in bulk containers (typically 200 L drums)
- Sale of sorted olives in easy to handle 20 litre plastic buckets – in brine
- Sale of sorted olives in smaller – typically 1 or 2 litre – plastic buckets in brine (pails

'Prior to packaging we taste test bulk table olives for any 'off flavours' (defects).

'We label containers using labels which meet Australian requirements, accurately describe the product and bear a Best Before date, a Harvest Year, and a unique Product Tracing Code which allows the product to be tracked back to the batch from the processor and the packing session.

Note: If the bulk table olives are sold to a third party using their own labels (house brand), the third party **MUST NOT** apply the AOA Certification Trade Mark logo to their own products unless they are also Signatories to *OliveCare®*, and the product meets quality and labelling requirements.

4. Product Distribution:

'We note that:

'Table olives are sensitive to heat, so efforts must be made to ensure the product is not allowed to get above 20°C. The use of thermal blankets may be an effective tool in some circumstances.

'If product is transported to the retail outlet by a commercial transport contractor, the vehicle needs to be covered and shaded – refrigeration during transport is generally not practical.

Table olive producers need to maintain a log of temperature in the storage facility, and log temperatures during transportation.

Producers need to instruct the retailer on how to monitor stock in store to ensure appropriate storage conditions and stock rotation.

A record of where each batch of product is sold to needs to be maintained by the producer for the purposes of product traceability and recall:

- Growers need paperwork to identify the block(s) from where the batch originated.
- Processors need paperwork to identify the grove and date of delivery.
- Bottlers need to be able to identify the source of the table olives.
- Merchants need to identify customers to whom bulk or bottled product is on-sold.
- Samples of each batch of table olives should be retained for later testing.
- Product packages ready for sale to the public should be able to be traced back to the grove that grew the olives

5. Other Risks to Product Safety or Quality

We have discussed the specific storage, packaging and distribution processes we use in our enterprise. We have undertaken a Biological, Chemical and Physical Hazard Analysis and identified the following additional issues which require careful management to maintain product safety and quality:

<add risk issues and management solutions, or state "None identified">