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Trainee chefs taught about EVOO excellence

Trainee chefs and culinary school students in Melbourne and Sydney will be educated in the benefits of cooking with Australian Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO), under a new project in the Hort Innovation Olive Fund, to be implemented by Nutrition Australia's Vic Division.

Previous industry research has indicated a lack of knowledge in the local food service sector about Australian EVOO, with many chefs unaware of how the oil is produced, the variety of taste profiles available, its benefits, correct storage and use in cooking and food preparation.

Education is given a high priority in the industry's recently developed *Olive Strategic Investment Plan 2017-2021*, and Nutrition Australia won the tender to deliver the *Olive oil food service program (OL16004)*, a two-year plan to increase awareness of Australian EVOO and produce educational tools for the food service industry.

Beth Scholes, senior dietitian with Nutrition Australia's Vic Division, said the project will provide insights into the current usage patterns for Australian EVOO, including the factors that drive its purchase

and consumption within the food service sector.

"We'll be talking to stakeholders in the food industry in terms of what oils they stock – including competitor products to EVOO – and why, whether cost is a factor and how much they understand about using oils in culinary training," she said.

"We'll also research relevant domestic and international food trends that impact on olive oil consumption, and we'll talk to olive growers in NSW and Victoria about what they see as common misconceptions about EVOO, and what they'd like to highlight to the food industry.

"We need to understand all that before we can talk to student chefs to figure out how we can potentially change the use of EVOO."

Beth said the exchange of information is necessary to alter the perceptions of EVOO in the market place.

"I think the common misconception is that you can't cook with EVOO, that it's more for salads or served fresh, and that the flavour is the same for all EVOO, whereas we

know the flavour is different. It can be altered by the freshness of the oil and there's a lot of factors that contribute to the taste," she said.

The main goal is the education of trainee and student chefs who are new to the industry and the production of videos will assist in getting the message out.

"During the project we'll be talking to growers as well as established chefs, student chefs and TAFE and culinary school trainers in Melbourne and Sydney, and making short, snappy videos with the aim of boosting usage and consumption of EVOO in the food sector," she said.

"We'll also produce fact sheets and a new web page to offer something more visual and active, to increase the reach of the information and build awareness of EVOO."

Educational material will be produced in the first half of 2018 and rolled out to the food industry over the following 12 months to May 2019.



The project objectives are:

YEAR 1:

1. Gain insight into current usage patterns of EVOO including purchase and consumption drivers
2. Gain insight into competitor products, and overall food trends relevant to the foodservice sector
3. Collect information on the attributes, benefits and uses of Australian EVOO

YEAR 2:

4. Develop education material regarding the attributes, benefits and uses of Australian EVOO
5. Deliver an education program targeted at priority foodservice stakeholders (culinary training institutes and trainee chefs) on the attributes, benefits and uses of Australian EVOO
6. Communicate to Australian olive oil growers the expectations and usage requirements of olive oil to assist with alignment of their business plans and practices.