



Applying HACCP in the Tunisian Olive Oil Industry: A Theoretical Background

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Abstract

Olive oil has proven nutritional value and can command a high market price for farmers and processors. It promises significant income generating potential as well as social empowerment. To meet consumers' expectations for quality, safety and authenticity, olive oil products should be grown, harvested and processed according to internationally recognized food safety management standards. Instead of retrospectively inspecting and testing the end-product, a preventative approach that anticipates potential biological, chemical and physical hazards at all stages of the value chain should be incorporated to preserve the quality and ensure the safety of olive oil and olive fruits. In this research paper, we overlay a HACCP food safety management system on the olive oil value chain in Tunisia. Given the importance of Tunisia in the international market of olive oil, we discuss HACCP in context of the country specificities and we analyze the possibilities and challenges of implementing HACCP in the Tunisian olive oil industry. HACCP promises several advantages including the preservation of product quality and safety for human consumption. Moreover, HACCP can aid Tunisian export sales, improve customers satisfaction and enhance Tunisian branding and marketing. However, this food safety management system requires the commitment of significant resources and the engagement of all stakeholders in the plan.

Keywords: *Olive Oil Industry, HACCP, Tunisia, Quality, Opportunities, Challenges.*