



Applications Notes

Oil and Moisture in Olive paste and pomace

Measurement of oil and moisture in olives provides information that enables **maximization of yield** through; growth of olive varieties that yield high oil levels, harvesting the crop at the optimal time, and optimization of the oil extraction process. As farmers often receive payment on the basis of moisture and oil content and not simply weight both the Olive Producers and the Olive processors profit from being able to make instantaneous on-line or at-line measurements of these constituents.

Olive oil Extraction Process

More than one process exists, the more traditional methods involve hydraulic presses and the more recent, decanter centrifugation processes. The latter involves grinding the olives and stones into a fine paste which is malaxed (beaten) in order to break up the oil/water emulsion and cause the formation of larger droplets of oil. An addition of water is made to the paste prior to pumping it into a large horizontal centrifuge/decanter where it is spun at high speed causing the phases to separate according to their different densities into a solid fraction referred to as pomace, an oil, and a vegetable water fraction. The two liquid fractions are centrifuged again, at even higher speeds to separate residual water and oil respectively.

Measurement Location and Performance

Several measurement locations are feasible:

1. On the paste as it feeds into the centrifuge/decanter
2. On pomace exiting the centrifuge/decanter through a pipe containing a viewing window
3. On pomace in the screw conveyor

Measurement is also feasible At-line using a bench top unit which instantaneously measures the moisture and oil content of a sample placed in a Petri dish. Please refer to an application note "Bench Top Olive NIR Tester"

(1)



(2)



(3)



Location		Pre-decanter	Post-decanter
	Range	Accuracy	Accuracy
Moisture	40-70%	0.9%	1.2%
Oil	15-35%	0.6%	0.3%