

A TASTING COMMITTEE FOR OLIVE OIL QUALITY CERTIFICATION



➔ The Customs laboratories have always been performing tests and analysis of olive oil, representing one of the basic products for human consumption, symbol of the Mediterranean diet, as well as source of pride for the Italian agriculture.

In 1991 the EC Regulation N. 2568 provided for new chemical and physical parameters and new methods of quality control of oils, introducing a sensorial organoleptic analysis method named panel test, that is to say a consistent assessment test by a tasting committee made up of at least twelve professionals.

Since 1991 the Customs Agency Chemical Laboratories have been carrying out such a multifaceted assessment activity with the recognition of the European Commission and the International Olive Oil Council, on the basis of the results obtained from tasting rounds.

The tasting Committees of the chemical laboratories of Rome, Genoa, Bari and Palermo have been authorized by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural and Forestal Resources to ascertain organoleptic properties of vergine olive oils and perform their certification on behalf of public administrations and private operators.

After more than ten years of activity, positively rated at all levels, we can state that today, the panel test for olive oil is one of the speciality offered by our customs chemical laboratories.



GEMMOLOGY AND TRANSGENIC FOOD: OUR LATEST SPECIAL SERVICES

➔ Besides the extremely broad competences of our laboratories, we have recently added some remarkable new services. First of all gemmology, a field previously lacking an effective State certification body, and in which the need for countering fraudulent imports and guaranteeing traders about the objective quality and value of the products were strongly felt. The new unit for gemstone analyses, located in the Rome lab, is entirely dedicated to the analysis and valuation of the main characteristics of all gemstones, diamonds, coloured stones, pearls, coral and ivory items.

This service is essential to revive the sector's image, to boost the relevant investment and employment, so far affected by the difficulties to irrefutably identify counterfeit goods and frauds, as well as by traders' unlawful behaviours. Still recent, but already showing positive results, is our expertise in controlling food. In fact, the strict Community legislation on this matter prescribes very precise rules on the information to be provided and the labelling of food with a content of modified DNA higher than 1%. Our laboratories are able to fulfil such a duty by applying the Real Time PCR analysis method, which increases the specificity of the reaction and of the sensitivity even in cases of a negligible percentage of modified genes. This type of analysis is highly sensitive and must be very carefully performed in a specific and dedicated environment, in order to prevent dangerous contaminations and to always assure quality as the common main feature of our labs.



CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

Certifications may be applied for in the following merceological sectors



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alimentary products ■ Alcohol and alcoholic products ■ Coffee ■ Meat ■ Cereals and their by-products ■ Milk and dairy products ■ Oils and vegetable fats ■ Vegetables and fruit ■ Sugar, synthetic sweetener and polyhydric alcohol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Oil products ■ Mineral turpentine ■ Mineral oil additives ■ Alchilbenzoli ■ Benzine ■ Special benzine ■ Benzene ■ Biodiesel ■ Bitumen ■ Emulsions: water-gas oil, water-bunker C fuel oil ■ Aromatic extracts ■ Gas oils ■ Liquid Propane Gas ■ Pure hydrocarbons ■ Methane ■ Accidental blends ■ Bio-diesel blends- mineral oils ■ Solvent naphtha ■ Lubricating oils ■ Fuel oils ■ Paraffin ■ Burning oil ■ Polyolefin ■ Chemicals containing mineral oils ■ Lubrificant preparations ■ Refluents ■ Solvents and diluents ■ Toluene ■ Vaseline ■ Xilenes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Industrial products ■ Organic industry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● shoes ● paper and cardboard ● leather and hide ● plastic material and molds ● textile materials and manufactured articles ● pharmaceutical products ● perfumes and cosmetic preparations ● dyers ● psychothropic substances and drugs ● tensioactives and detergents ● paint and varnish ■ Inorganic industry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● metals ● precious metals ● cast-iron, steel and alloys | |





THE NEW MERCEOLOGY ORIGINATES FROM OUR LABORATORIES

→ The Italian Customs laboratories were set up with the aim of performing controls and tests necessary for the classification of important products and their corresponding taxation according to the relevant category within merceology (sugar was the first product) and represent today a modern structure able to perform analysis and certifications for any kind of goods and products, ranging from foodstuff, hydrocarbons, drugs, clothes and spirits. Today, our 15 laboratories, scattered all over the territory, from Trieste to Palermo, from Turin to Rome, may be considered as specialised structures of reference not only for the tax administration, but also for all the institutions which are involved in the safeguard of the natural environment and health matters, as well as fighting against counterfeiting and repressing frauds.

In an effort to offer and guarantee an efficient and effective service, our activities are carried out according to rigorous Quality Handbook subject to continuous updating, reflecting the

evolution of international technical legislation governing applicable procedures, different stages of the analytical work, calibration of equipment, competence of technicians and professionals, their code of conduct. Besides their institutional activity, carried out on behalf of public bodies, our laboratories are now part of the quality system Italy and are able to issue certifications and analysis reports for private commercial operators.

Such activities increase the level of professionalism, by continually confronting market challenger and other possible competitors, as well as envisaging participation in international partnerships for mutual recognition of analytical results.

Within such a wider scope, our clients may count on value-added certifications issued by a structure which, according to tradition and its institutional status, performs its tasks in full compliance with the principles of legality and transparency: two principles which belong to our time-honoured tradition.



CHEMICAL LABORATORIES

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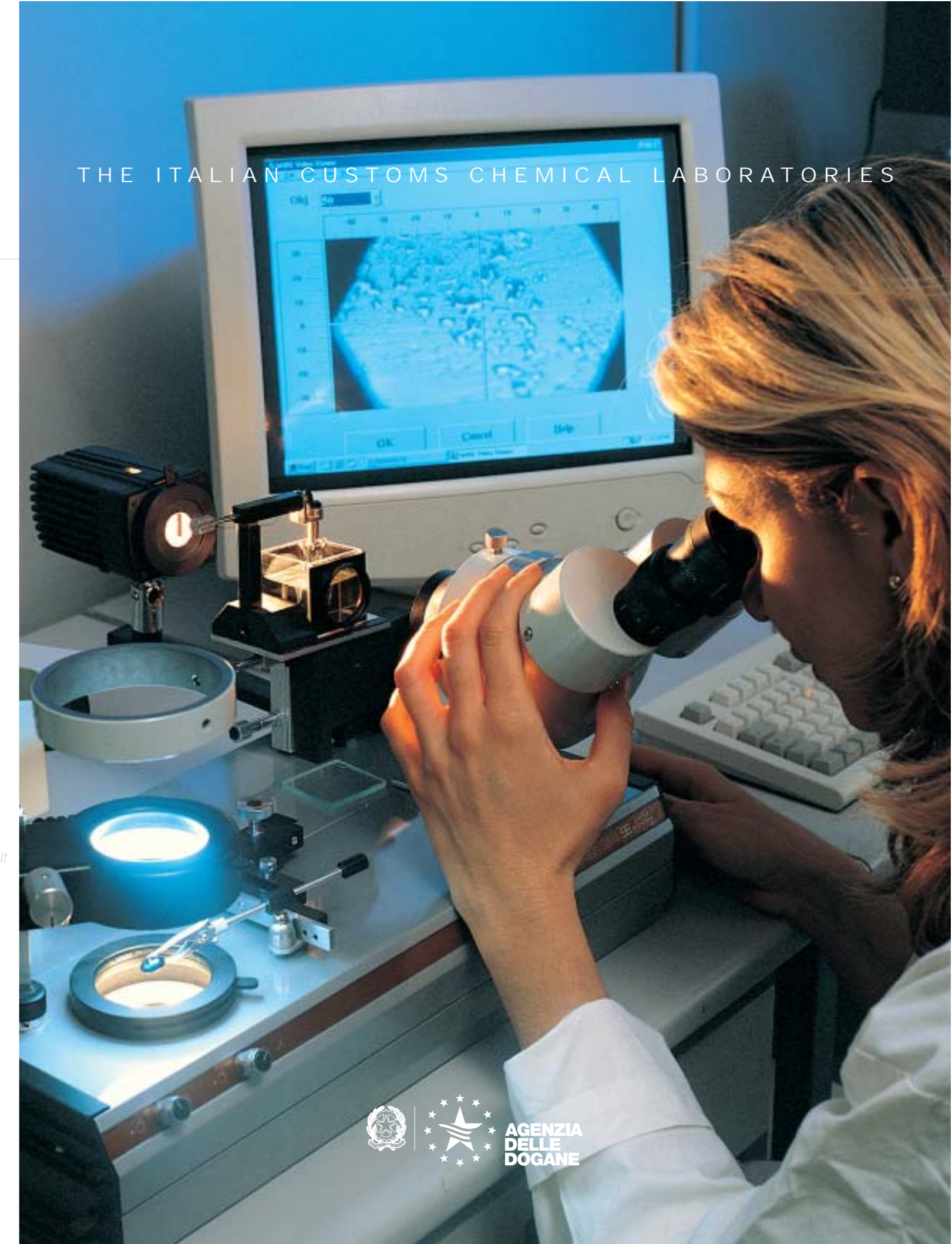
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THE ITALIAN CUSTOMS CHEMICAL LABORATORIES

