



UCD sponsored courses to teach amateur olive growers

Experts lecture in Lodi

By **CHARLES HINRIKSSON**
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This Friday and Saturday, olive aficionados will flock to the Hutchins St. Square conference center in Lodi to hear international experts discourse on topics regarding various aspects of the production of olive oil.

The course is aimed at olive lovers of all levels and will include discussion on economics in the olive oil industry, advanced methods of producing and harvesting olives, varieties of olive oil and pest control.

"The olive oil industry is growing very quickly in California," said Dan Flynn, executive director of the UC Davis Olive Center. "It's expected to quadruple in size over the next few years as the trellis system becomes more widespread and farmers get more volume from an orchard for less cost."

The courses are sponsored by the UC Davis Olive Center, whose stated goal is to, "Promote increased market share of California table olives and olive oil through education, research and outreach," according to its website.

"The courses will cover olives

from A to Z, the nuts and bolts of growing olives and processing them into oil," Flynn said. "They'll be especially informative to people who are planning to enter or already involved in the olive oil business."

In addition to a number of California experts, researcher Joan Tues of the Institute of Agro-Food Research and Technology from Rues, Spain, and Professor Angelo Godini, of the University of Bari, Italy, will be speaking on modern production systems in Spain and management practices for super-high-density planting systems, respectively.

"The California olive oil industry has been around for quite a while," Deborah Rogers, of the Olive Press in Sonoma County, said. "But the recent boom is partly because of a really great article in the New Yorker about fraud in the international olive oil communities."

Rogers also cites "the pop-



Man Yip, U / Aggie graphic

Olive Course

Friday and Saturday
Lodi, Hutchins St. Square
conference center

ularity of the Mediterranean diet, the cost of the Euro, fear that imported olive oil may be defective or adulterated and a growing desire to go local" as factors important in the burgeoning California olive oil industry.

Olive oil is obtained by crushing olives and extracting the liquids, making it one of the few unrefined oils.

"It's been getting a lot of atten-

tion recently for its health benefits," Flynn said. "Olives are high in monounsaturated fats and the good cholesterol, which together help promote good cardiovascular health and reduce blood pressure, bad cholesterol levels and heart attacks."

Olives were brought to California in the 1700s by Franciscan missionaries from Mexico and today accounts for 33,051 acres in the San Joaquin Valley and Northern Sacramento Valley with a farm gate value of \$34.3 million for 73,000 tons, according to the Olive Fact Sheet published by the UCD Fruit and Nut Research and Information Center.

"UCD are leaders in the industry," Rogers said. "It just doesn't get any better than that."

In addition to a number of speakers on various aspects of the industry, the courses will feature a visit to the Corto Olive Orchard in Lodi, where attendees will be able to view the most basic aspects of the olive oil industry.

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