



## Dr. Oz Sued for False Olive Oil Attacks

**ATLANTA – November 29, 2016** – Dr. Mehmet C. Oz, who has come under fire for relying on junk science, unproven claims and questionable sources, was sued yesterday by the North American Olive Oil Association in Fulton County Georgia under that state’s food libel statute in connection with allegations made on his show regarding the quality and integrity of olive oil sold in U.S. supermarkets.

The story in question first aired on May 12, 2016. According to the complaint filed by the [North American Olive Oil Association](#) (NAOOA), Dr. Oz falsely stated that a “shocking 80% of the extra virgin olive oil that you buy every day in your supermarket isn’t the real deal. It may even be fake.” The complaint further alleges that Dr. Oz falsely portrayed olive oils as “mixed with artificial colors and less expensive oils.” In reality, for 25 years, NAOOA has used independent [International Olive Council](#) (IOC) labs to test hundreds of olive oils collected directly from supermarkets annually, and results consistently show that more than 98 percent of olive oil in U.S. retail outlets is authentic. The IOC was chartered by the United Nations more than 50 years ago to oversee the production and quality of olive oil around the world.

“Rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific research has consistently shown that all types of olive oil have significant health benefits, including reducing heart disease,” said Eryn Balch, executive vice president of the NAOOA.

Additionally, featured guest [Maia Hirschbein](#), who works for West Coast olive oil producer California Olive Ranch, was introduced only as an “olive oil expert.” According to the complaint filed by the NAOOA, “[a]t no point in the show did any person disclose Ms. Hirschbein’s vested interest in denigrating olive oils originating outside of California or her vested interest in promoting California olive oils.” California olive oil special interests have coordinated a national campaign to spread false information about the purity of olive oil available in the U.S. As a result of this effort, overall U.S. consumption of olive oil has stagnated after tripling from 1990-2012, while California production has benefited from double-digit annual growth in recent years.

“Ultimately, too many consumers have been misled into buying a more expensive olive oil or not buying olive oil at all,” said Balch. “Dr. Oz has a unique platform to help millions of people make better decisions about their health. He should use that platform to provide accurate and properly documented information to consumers.”

In 2014, a British medical journal found that [fewer than half of the on-air recommendations](#) made by Dr. Oz were supported by scientific evidence. Likewise, he was [forced to withdraw his support](#) for a “magic weight loss cure” after he was brought before a U.S. Senate consumer protection panel to be questioned about the scientific evidence behind the supplement. The Federal Trade Commission later sued the producers of the product for [false and deceptive advertising](#). Further, in April 2015, a group of 10 prominent physicians wrote to the Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine at Columbia University expressing concerns about Dr. Oz’s faculty appointment because he [“has repeatedly shown disdain for science and for evidence-based medicine.”](#)



The lawsuit was filed in Fulton County Superior Court by the NAOOA. Additional named defendants include Entertainment Media Ventures Inc. d/b/a Oz Media and Zoco Productions LLC.

**About the North American Olive Oil Association**

Established in 1989, the North American Olive Oil Association is a trade association of marketers, packagers and importers of olive oil in the United States, Canada and their respective suppliers abroad. The association strives to foster a better understanding of olive oil and its taste, versatility and health benefits. For more information, visit [www.AboutOliveOil.org](http://www.AboutOliveOil.org) and [www.OliveOilConference.com](http://www.OliveOilConference.com).

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