

CDR FOODLAB

Crofts Ltd. is a producer of extra virgin and crude avocado oils in Kenya. Avocados are difficult to manage due to the fact that they ripen at different rates, and have a very short window of perfect ripeness. Therefore, avocado oil quality can be affected by many factors too, such as quality of fruit, processing times and temperatures, as well as post-harvest handling and ripening procedures.

Our aim at Crofts has always been to produce the best quality avocado oil in the world. This could only be achieved by ensuring that we closely monitor every aspect of production from receiving of avocados to storage of produced oil. Through this entire chain, we realized that monitoring of oil quality at every step would provide valuable information on improving quality and then maintaining these levels of quality. This became especially important as competition increased and quality of avocados varied through the year.

Our procedure prior to purchasing the FoodLab unit was to produce the oil and store it. We'd then send samples of the oil from production as well as samples from the storage tanks to a local laboratory to check the quality. We'd test the oil for Free Fatty Acids (FFA) & Peroxide Levels (PV) to know the quality. The issue with this would typically be the time taken to send samples to the lab, along with the laboratory's turnaround time in sending the results back. It could easily take 6-10 days before we had the lab reports with the results. This also resulted in high costs of testing, and in some instances, clients not accepting the laboratory results as the labs in Kenya were not internationally certified.

We would then have to prepare additional samples for each client's shipment, and send these samples to a laboratory in Europe to carry out the same tests again. The turnaround time for this would be 14-21 days, and the costs were significantly higher.

In 2022, we purchased the CDR FoodLab. This unit allowed us to test our oil for FFA and PV within our factory. We'd be able to know the quality of each batch in real time, allowing us to separate qualities immediately. The FoodLab is extremely easy to use, and staff don't need a qualification to test the oil. A simple, quick training lesson was provided to key staff, who are then able to test the oil in real time.

This significantly reduced the cost of testing, and above all, reduced the turnaround time of testing and received results down to 10 mins from taking samples! The accuracy of the results were also more accepted by our clients as the unit is calibrated well and allows very little room for human error. All results are stored in the machine's onboard storage, which allows management to verify the results being reported.

The CDR FoodLab helped us improve our oil quality significantly, which resulted in being awarded a Great Taste Award (by the Guild of Fine Foods in London) in August 2022. Crofts



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is now regarded as the producer of the best quality avocado oil in the World. The FoodLab certainly helped in achieving this status as we were able to test the oil faster and make changes in our production process to improve the oil quality in real time.

The FoodLab was one of the best investments we have made in our avocado oil business. It improved our business, helped in improving efficiency in our process and has allowed us to maintain our quality and consistency. It's a great piece of kit and worth every penny!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miraj Shah".

Miraj Shah
Co-founder/Director
Crofts Ltd.