# **Tariffs press olive oil production forward in Kern County**

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**Body**

***Kern*** County is known as the heart of agriculture, but local growers are starting to see the olive ***oil*** production take off thanks, in part, to recent tariffs.

***Kern*** County has more than 800,000 acres that grow a wide variety of crops and only 400 of them are used for olive production, according to the ***Kern*** County Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards.

Rio Bravo Ranch, one of those olive ***oil*** producers sits at the mouth of the Canyon, off Highway 178.

At this ranch here, we grow citrus, mandarins, and navels, Brian Grant, COO for Rio Bravo Ranch said. Starting next year, well be harvesting lemons and with luck from mother nature, well have some cherries.

Although the Olive ***Oil*** production is very small in comparison to other crops in the county, Grant said they are seeing an opportunity for the crops growth in the market.

He said Central Valley could see a local olive ***oil*** production boom in the coming year.

We hope were on the pioneering side of that, Grant said.

There are several reasons for the shift in demand.

Although Spain, Italy, Greece, Morocco, and Turkey are among the top olive ***oil*** producers, the trade wars recently imposed on tariff goods including olive ***oil*** have also affected some of the producing countries.

Grant said climate and fungus issues have also caused a significant crop failure in Italys olive ***oil*** industry.

I just know they are not producing what they once produced, he said. I believe these big olive ***oil*** companies are looking for other regions, so it makes perfect sense that they would look at California.

For now, Grant said they will maximize on the opportunity here at home.

We know we have a climate thats very similar, he said. We thought we could grow, and we thought we could produce high quality olive ***oil*** and we have, its really working out well. 2019 Global Data Point.

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