

Simultaneous Analysis of Glycerides (mono, di, and triglycerides) and Free Fatty Acids in Palm Oil

Palm oil is the second largest edible oil produced in the world. It is comprised of mainly triglycerides with some mono and diglycerides. Free fatty acids and some other sediments and components in the crude oil are considered impurities and may be removed in the refining process. The level of refinement varies depending on source and final use.

Analytical methods for oils, like palm oil, often use GC/FID methods with derivatization. An HPLC method was developed for the analysis of palm oil using a binary pump system with the Corona[®] Charged Aerosol Detector (CAD[®]) for detection. The method requires simple sample preparation and no derivatization. Comparisons were made to the AOAC official method 993.24 which uses a differential refractometry detector. The repeatability and selectivity of the system was checked as well as the limit of detection (LOD) for individual components.

Method Parameters

Column:	C18 MGIII, 4.6mm I.D. x 250mm, 5µm at 30°C
Nebulizer Heater:	30°C
Filter:	None
Mobile Phase A:	75% Acetonitrile, 12% Methanol, 8% HPLC grade water, 4% THF, and 0.3% Acetic Acid
Mobile Phase B:	90% Acetone and 10% Acetonitrile
Gradient Profile:	Table 1
Flow Rate:	1.5-1.9 mL/min
Run Time:	70 minutes

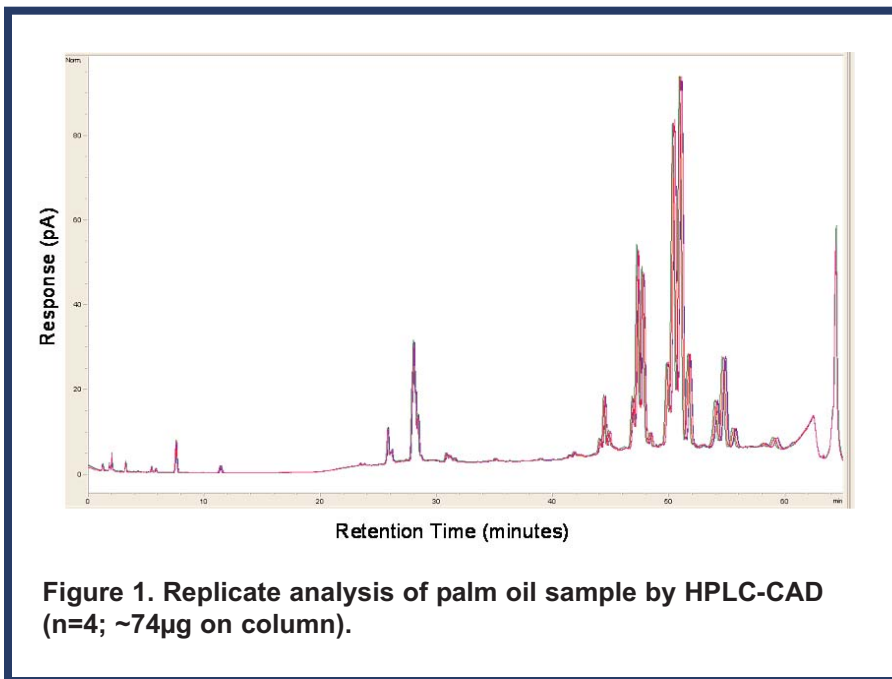


Figure 1. Replicate analysis of palm oil sample by HPLC-CAD (n=4; ~74µg on column).

Sample Preparation and Analysis

The material analyzed was a commercially available sample of Red Palm Oil from Jungle Products. The oil is listed as being from the fruit of the Dura plant and in its natural state without refinement. The sample was simply dissolved and diluted in a 1:1 solution of methanol and tetrahydrofuran (THF). The concentration used for analysis was ~7.4mg/mL. The palm oil sample was injected multiple times on multiple days to show reproducibility and robustness.

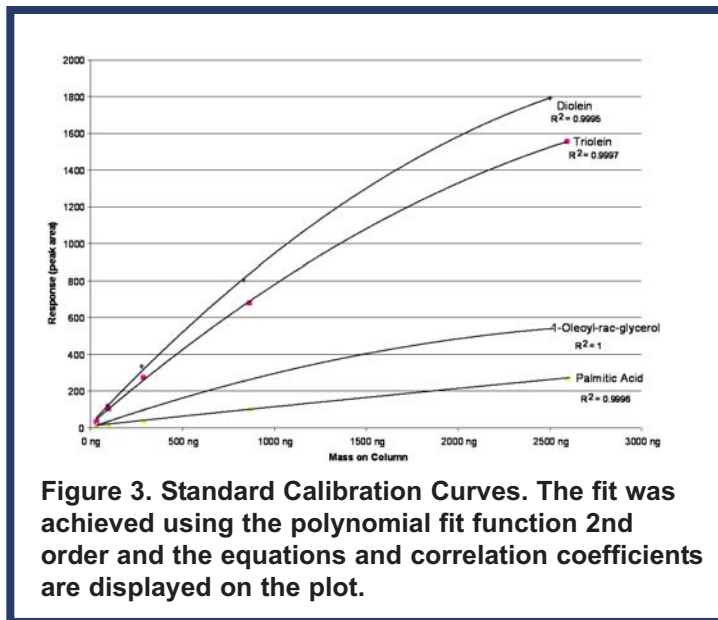
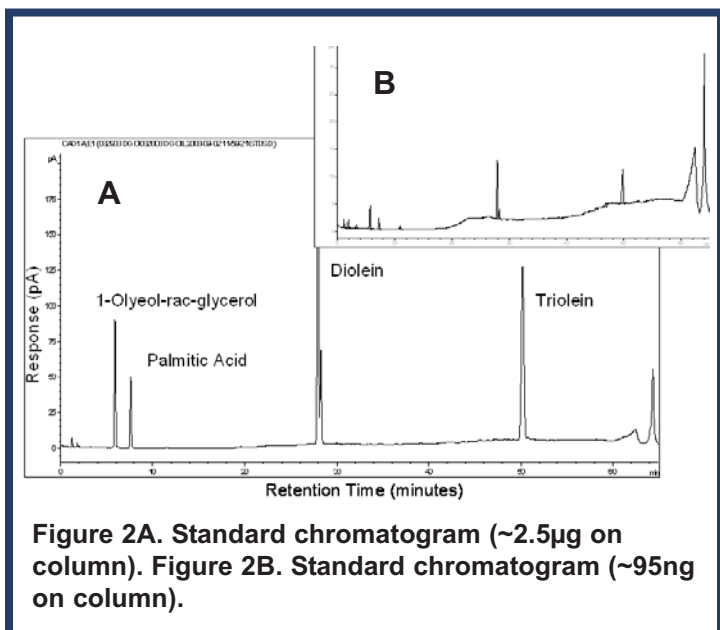
Standards of palmitic acid (Sigma P-0500), 1-oleoyl-rac-glycerol (Sigma M7765), 1,3 diolein (Sigma D3627), and triolein (Sigma T7140) were also prepared in a 1:1 solution of methanol and THF. The standards were diluted and run at concentrations from 250 µg/mL to 3 µg/mL. 10µL injections were made throughout the analysis for all standards and samples. The data were processed and the response versus the column load was plotted.

Time	%A	%B	Flow Rate
0.00	100	0	1.5
5.00	100	0	1.5
11.00	96	4	1.5
24.00	37	63	1.5
35.00	32	68	1.5
45.00	18	82	1.9
58.00	15	85	1.9
60.00	5	95	1.5
63.00	100	0	1.5
65.00	100	0	1.5

Table 1. Gradient Conditions.

Results and Discussion

Reproducibility of the method was tested by comparing four different injections of the palm oil sample at 74µg column load. The peak areas for an individual peak as well as groups of peaks were observed and the results are shown in Table 2. The peak retention times exhibited less than 1% variation over the gradient run for all samples observed. Four overlays of the palm oil are shown in Figure 1. The chromatograms for the four standards run are illustrated in Figures 2A and 2B. The correlation is done using a polynomial fit and was greater than >0.999 for all points (Figure 3). The LOD of the was <32ng on column for the mono-, di-, and tri-glyceride standards. A matrix effect was observed at the retention time seen for palmitic acid and interfered with the peak at low levels. The observed LOQ was therefore ~100ng on column for the palmitic acid.

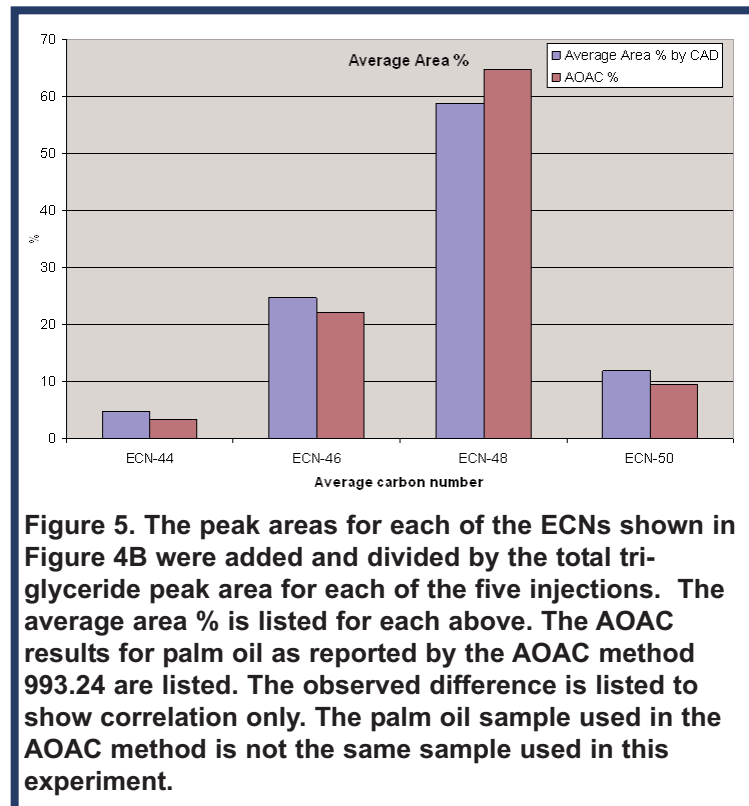
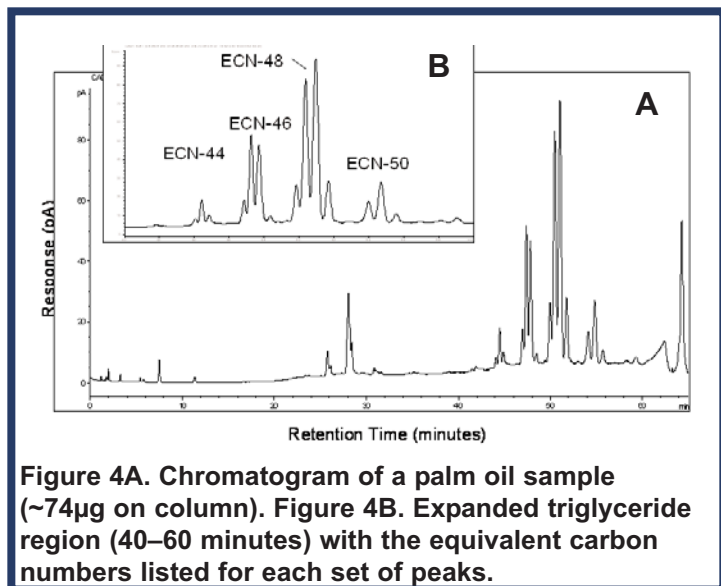


A correlation was performed with the data collected using the Corona detector (Figure 4A) and the data discussed in the AOAC method (Method #993.24: Triglycerides (by Partition Numbers) in Vegetable Oils Liquid Chromatography Method IUPAC-AOCS-AOAC Method). The elution order observed in this method correlated well with the Equivalent Carbon Number as discussed in the AOAC method. The percent contribution for each group (shown in Figure 4B) was calculated by adding the individual area together and then dividing this by the total triglyceride peak areas. The correlation between the values obtained in the single sample analyzed by Charged Aerosol Detection and the large study done by the AOAC are compared in Figure 5 and show a good correlation.

	Average Peak Area	%RSD
Total Triglycerides	6900	0.64
Peak at 50 minutes	1478	0.92
Palmitic Acid	72	1.63

Table 2. The average peak area and relative percent deviation for four analyses of palm oil at ~74µg (on column).

The Corona[®] Charged Aerosol Detector



Conclusions

The Corona Detector using the HPLC method described above demonstrates the ability to measure several major lipid components of palm oil. The increased sensitivity and resolution provided by the gradient system and the Corona detector provides improved % RSD's over the values observed in AOAC method 933.24. The method also provides a means for quantifying the amount of free fatty acids and mono-, di-, and tri-glycerides present in the oil. Even with the limitations noticed due to the matrix effect on palmitic acid, the LOD of the free fatty acid in palm oil is still estimated to be <0.25% w/w when using an injection of ~74µg of palm oil on column. This method was shown to be more universal than the AOAC HPLC method. It also provides significant advantage over GC methods which requires both extra sample manipulation and derivatization procedures.

Ordering Information

Corona *ultra*[™] Charged Aerosol Detector 70-8773
 Nitrogen generator 70-6003
 Column Capcell PAK C18 MGIII 88-92635



ESA - A Dionex Corporation
 22 Alpha Road
 Chelmsford, MA 01824-4171 USA
 Tel: (800) 959-5095
 Tel: (978) 250-7000
 Fax: (978) 250-7090
 Email: na_esa_info@dionex.com
 www.coronaultra.com

Corporate Headquarters
 Dionex Corporation
 1228 Titan Way
 Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3603
 Tel: (408) 737-0700
 Fax: (408) 730-9403
 www.dionex.com

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