



Image Credit: Flickr User [Purblind](#)

Matt's pulse was pounding. Sweat was beginning to collect at his temples. Just so slightly, his fingers were shaking. He stared at the hot dog. Could he do it? "What's the matter?" asked Jen, and Matt turned to look in her eyes. She was beautiful. And kind. And funny. And she liked baseball. Matt had to be cool. He couldn't look like an idiot. He smiled. "Nothing's the matter," he said. But something was. On his hot dog, the mustard was the wrong shade of yellow. It wasn't wrong by much, but it was enough. He couldn't eat it. "Are you sure?" asked Jen. "You're staring at your hot dog. Is it okay?" This was only the second date. Coincidentally, it was the second date Matt had had all year. If he didn't eat the hot dog, she would think he was a weirdo. She wouldn't date a weirdo. He had to eat the hot dog. But how could he eat the hot dog? The mustard was the wrong color!



What's a hot dog without yellow mustard? Image Credit: Flickr User [stu spivak](#)

### **Brand Consistency Is an Essential Ingredient for Mustard Manufacturers**

[Brand consistency is a key product feature](#) for manufacturers of yellow mustard. Simply put, yellow mustard needs to be yellow. Bottle after bottle, batch after batch, whether it's being sold in Boston or Beijing, consumers expect their mustard to be exactly the same shade of yellow. If for some reason—[variation in raw materials](#), or a mistake during the manufacturing process—the mustard isn't yellow, customers are likely to notice. In the finicky world of food safety, off-color batches can cause damage to a company's reputation. This damage can lead to a decline in sales and a loss of market share.



Mustard before it gets to the bottle. Image Credit: Flickr User [rustyruth1959](#)

### **Spectrophotometers Ensure Objective Color Quality Control**

To avoid this, manufacturers implement color quality control regimens. Before mustard is bottled, samples must be tested to ensure they are the proper color. This can be achieved rapidly and effectively with the aid of instrumental color quality control devices like spectrophotometers. These instruments measure color by assessing changes in bursts of light that they reflect off objects. This allows them to ascertain the exact shade of an object rapidly and accurately.

To implement color quality control in a mustard production process, manufacturers must test a representative number of samples. In the quality control lab, technicians should test these samples [against a pre-programmed standard color](#). If they return results within an acceptable tolerance range, the batches they represent are clear for bottling. If they return results outside the acceptable range, the batches should be corrected and retested before processing.

The use of instrumental color quality control is preferable over human observers for its reliability and recordkeeping. Human observers see color subjectively. We lack the language to describe color with any true degree of specificity. Further, we can be thrown off by differences in lighting or texture. Spectrophotometers, by contrast, measure color objectively. They describe color as a series of numerical values, with decimal accuracy. This not only allows for accurate measurement, but for objective documentation as well. As spectrophotometers use controlled lighting to measure color, they cannot be thrown off by ambient light conditions.

With over six decades experience developing color control solutions for the food industry, HunterLab has the expertise to help your company implement the perfect quality control regimen for your mustard. To learn more about which spectrophotometer will be best for your process, [contact our experts today!](#)