

Title Exploring the consumer drivers and barriers behind fresh fruit and vegetable choices
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Abstract

With increasing obesity levels in Australia, it is important that consumers make healthier eating choices including diets rich in fresh fruits and vegetables. To date there is little information available for dietitians and primary producers alike regarding the specific drivers of, and barriers to, consumer choice for fresh produce in Australia. If we understood the key triggers that motivate our consumers to purchase fresh produce, we could use this information to increase the sales and consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, and this would translate to a healthier Australian diet.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries in Queensland is beginning new fundamental research work on consumer methodologies that explore consumer choice drivers and barriers for fresh primary produce. Preliminary results from a recent consumer study gave promising results for apples. The applied methodology was based on a model to measure consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Five attributes were found that consumers identify as positively influencing their purchase decision for apples: namely 'fresh, just been harvested', 'better taste', 'healthier than the other available varieties', 'grown without the use of pesticide' and 'has a consistent quality' Three attributes were found to negatively influence their choice including 'less flavour', 'imported' and 'GMO'.

In the same apple study, consumer's willingness to pay was also explored. Results demonstrated that the attribute 'organic' spontaneously increases the average price consumers would be willing to pay for an apple by 20%. This approach will be used again in May 2007 with different varieties of apples to consolidate the findings from this study.