

**Title** Case studies to illustrate the value of sensory and consumer science for horticultural produce  
**Author** A. Poelman, C. Forde, C. Delahunty  
**Citation** Program and Abstract. 2007 Australasian Postharvest Conference. Crowne Plaza Terrigal, NSW, Australia. 12 September 2007. 87 p.  
**Keywords** fresh produce; sensory property

### **Abstract**

Sensory properties are one of the key drivers of the global food industry and probably the most important factor determining repeat purchase. With the abundance of choice in the retail channel horticultural produce needs to meet the demands of consumers in order to be selected. The horticultural sector increasingly acknowledges the need for a thorough understanding of consumer behaviour and preferences in order to supply products that meet these demands. Through the use of case studies, the value that sensory and consumer science can add to product optimization and breeding programmes and to the marketing of horticultural produce will be discussed. The case studies will address the value of combining consumer acceptance results with objective sensory measurements gathered by descriptive profiling and consumer segmentation on the basis of sensory property preferences. In addition, the role of information (e.g. brand, health and/or production information) in relation to sensory characteristics on consumer preferences will be discussed. The case studies will cover a range of horticultural products including pineapples onions and apples. The onion case study will highlight how consumer and sensory research assisted in growing a mild onion industry in Australia. Another case study will highlight the role that sensory and consumer research played in the development of new, branded apple varieties in Europe that were developed and marketed on the basis of their sensory profile.