

Abstract:

This research examines consumers' purchasing behavior in the stone fruit market. The most important factors that influence the decision to purchase peaches, plums, and nectarines are: that the product is safe to eat, healthy, sweet, it looks good, is a good value for the money, firmness, and ripeness. Consumers are unfamiliar with brix, acidity, and pressure concerning stone fruit. Simulated test marketing was used to expose consumers to peaches, plums, and nectarines with a Tested Ripe Label. The label had a positive impact on purchase interest, fifty-four percent of consumers indicated that they would probably or definitely purchase more stone fruit with the tested ripe label. The consumers that indicated an increase in purchase interest were profiled. These consumers find it more difficult to determine ripeness of peaches, plums and nectarines. Those that would purchase more stone fruit with a tested ripe label are more likely to purchase a different fruit if the grocery store does not have their desired fruit or if it does not appear ripe. Further, they are likely to purchase a higher quality stone fruit if it were more expensive.