

[Abstract:](#)

Consumer perceptions of food quality are dependent on many factors other than the organoleptic properties of products. Quality parameters include perceptions of risk associated with different potential food hazards, as well as ethical concerns associated with food production are likely to have an impact on consumer acceptance of quality. In addition, lack of consumer confidence in activities within the food chain reflects distrust in the activities of different stakeholders within food-production systems. It is these perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that may ultimately influence consumer behaviours.

The focus of this paper is to briefly review individual difference in risk perceptions and attitudes associated with food production, and to discuss how this influences consumer acceptance of food quality. It is concluded that many public concerns about food production issues, are the result of perceived lack of transparency in regulatory and production systems, and public perceptions that the “truth” about risks is being concealed in order to protect the vested interests of regulators, scientists, producers or the food industry. It is concluded that new integrated risk analysis systems should be developed which do not a priori assume that risk assessment, risk management and risk communication should be functionally separated.