

Title Importance and consumer perception of freshness of apples
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Abstract

The present investigation aimed at elucidating the importance of freshness for the consumer and its relationship to sensory and non-sensory properties of apples. A questionnaire was presented to the visitors of a local exhibition on food and 4758 data sets were collected over a five-month period. Six apple cultivars stored under different conditions were tested. Taste, aroma and freshness were most frequently chosen as decisive attributes for selecting apples. Freshness was important independently of people's age, gender and apple consumption. According to consumers the perception of freshness was best described by taste, crispness and juiciness. Other aspects also asked for, i.e. appearance, storage time, nutritional value and organic were of lesser importance. Age, gender and consumption of apples had an influence on the perception of freshness. From the sensory rating of apples by consumers, freshness appeared to be related to crispness, juiciness, aroma, and also to liking of apples. In conclusion, optimal sensory quality contributes essentially to the perception and expectation of freshness of apples.