

Title Consumer preferences for color, price, and vitamin C content of bell peppers.
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Citation HortScience Vol: 36 (2001); 795-800

Abstract

Most bell peppers (*Capsicum annuum*) produced and consumed are green. However, yellow, red, orange, white, black and purple bell peppers are also available. While bell pepper consumption in the United States has been increasing in the past 10 years, limited information is available on how their colour, retail price and vitamin C [ascorbic acid] content influence consumer preferences. A conjoint analysis of 435 consumer responses showed that, for the total sample, colour was about three times more important than retail price in shaping consumers' purchase decisions, while vitamin C content was nearly irrelevant. Six distinct consumer segments were identified through cluster analysis. Four segments favoured green peppers, while one segment favoured yellow and one favoured brown. Demographic variables generally were not good predictors of segment membership, but several behavioural variables, such as past bell pepper purchases, were significantly related to segment membership. While green is generally the preferred colour, market segments exist for orange, red, yellow and even brown peppers. Applications to marketing strategies suggested that price sensitivity could explain why green peppers were priced individually, but those of other colours were priced by weight, and that promotion of increased vitamin C content would be most effective if associated specifically with yellow and orange peppers.