Industry and Consumer Perspectives on Food for Health

Dr. Amy Bowen
• A results-based, independent not-for-profit organization focused on horticultural science and innovation
Expenditure on fruit and veg

- During an average shopping trip, how much do you spend on fresh whole vegetables and fruit per week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount spent ($)</th>
<th>% of consumers (n=455)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11-$20</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21-$30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $30</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

60% spend less than $30 per week on fruits and vegetables

65% of consumers shop an average 1-2 times per week
Consumers

Thoughts on fruits and vegetables

• Healthy
• Should eat more
• Expensive
• Inconvenient
• Seasonal
• Safety
• Confidence in science

• Only 40% of Canadians consumed 5+ servings of fruit and vegetable
  – Stats Canada, 2011
Consumers

Psychometric Scales

**General Health Interest**
I always follow a healthy and balanced diet.

The healthiness of food has little impact on my food choices.

**Natural Product Interest**
I would like to eat only organically grown vegetables.

In my opinion, organically grown foods are no better for my health than those grown conventionally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level</th>
<th>General Health Interest</th>
<th>Natural Product Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purchase drivers

• Purchase intent is hard to predict
  – consumption is usually the best prediction tool

• For 24% of consumers, production practices is the most important feature when selecting fruits and vegetables
  – 20% = price
  – 56% = combination of features
You are grocery shopping and notice a new variety of pear, how likely are you to try this pear?

Very likely = 30%

This new pear variety is uniquely Canadian; it was developed through an Ontario pear breeding program and grown in Ontario. Very likely = 46%

This new pear variety requires less sprays and pesticides due to natural disease resistance. Very likely = 66%
Local, Organic, Sustainable

Consumer definitions

• Local = decreased mile to transport
• Organic = food produced without the use of synthetic pesticides
• Sustainable = produced in an environmentally friendly way

Local = Organic = Sustainable
Consumer Confusion

Local = Organic = Sustainable

Locally produced foods are those...
- in my region
- in my country

Organic foods are produced without pesticides

Locally produced foods are GMO free
Consumers expenditure on organic food peaks between 0 to 10% of total food expenditure then declines rapidly. On the other hand expenditure on locally grown products is fairly evenly distributed.

Campbell et al., 2011
Confidence in science and technology

Values

- Food Safety
- Environmentally-friendly
- Food Affordability

Food safety had the largest impact on consumer approval of biotechnologies
## CONSUMER INSIGHT BITES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>RESEARCH PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in science and technology among consumers of organic products</td>
<td>The Customer Comes First: Putting Consumer Intelligence to Work for Horticulture</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>KEY FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>414 consumers evaluated hypothetical tomato products said to be produced using different methods of pest control</td>
<td>Consumers with low confidence in science and tech's ability to solve environmental problems were most likely to be consumers who preferred organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TAKEAWAY

Producers should strategize about how they communicate their approach to food production. High-tech approaches are seen as positive, but this can be a deterrent for nearly 1/4 of consumers.
What we know

- Consumers opinions often quite different from experts

- Consumer values have a great impact on food for health choices
  - Health interest
  - Production practices
  - Confidence
  - Safety
What we need

- Determine the best way to communicate food for health to consumers
- Better understanding of what motivates consumers to make healthy choices
Thank You

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