

WHAT INFLUENCES THE CONSUMERS' CHOICE OF TROPICAL FRUITS?

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ABSTRACT

New discoveries are very important for the consumers who get tired of old routines and are looking for new tastes. Thus, tropical fruits are amazing alternatives for those who are willing to try different varieties. The growing interest of consumers for new varieties encourages super/hypermarket retailers to offer a variety of tropical fruits that vary in species, size, and price. Food blogs and professionals contribute to the popularity of exotic fruits, with different experiments such as innovating dishes or decorating desserts undertaken, thus making these fruits become more attractive for the consumers. Also, for the market success of tropical fruits, their health benefits are very important for the conscious customers. On the other hand, there are some drawbacks that influence consumers' purchasing intention for tropical fruits. Chief among these is the setting of high prices for imported tropical fruits, as well as for new varieties that are not well known to consumers, and just started to be grown by local farmers. Even among neophilic consumers, the price of the tropical fruits becomes a disincentive for discovering the sensory attributes of the new product and increase the consumer expectations in terms of the fruit taste as well. For a consumer who does not know how to consume a newly discovered fruit, tasting an unripe form may cause a false perception in the consumer. Thus, the consumers should have enough awareness and knowledge even about the storage conditions of highly perishable tropical fruits. In terms of consumers, age, income level, number of people in the family, regular fruit, and vegetable consumption habits, preference of super/hypermarkets for shopping are also factors that affect tropical fruit consumption.

Keywords: Exotic, familiarity, consumer interest, fruit flavor, high perishability