

Elsewhere in this publication reference is made to the significant value that lifestyle and amenity horticulture adds to peoples' lives. The understanding and appreciation of this value is expected to increase as people recognise the importance of achieving a healthy lifestyle and a healthy environment. There

remain many parts of the world's cities and landscapes that can be transformed by the planting of amenity and lifestyle plants and flowers.

Whilst the foreseeable future has a number of challenges and opportunities, the future of horticulture is full of growth, potential and promise.

Consumer behaviour and profiles

Many opportunities for horticulture arise from a number of the current challenges.

It is important that producers and marketers understand the basis upon which consumers buy food, as availability and price are not the only criteria as is demonstrated in the following two graphs from different markets.

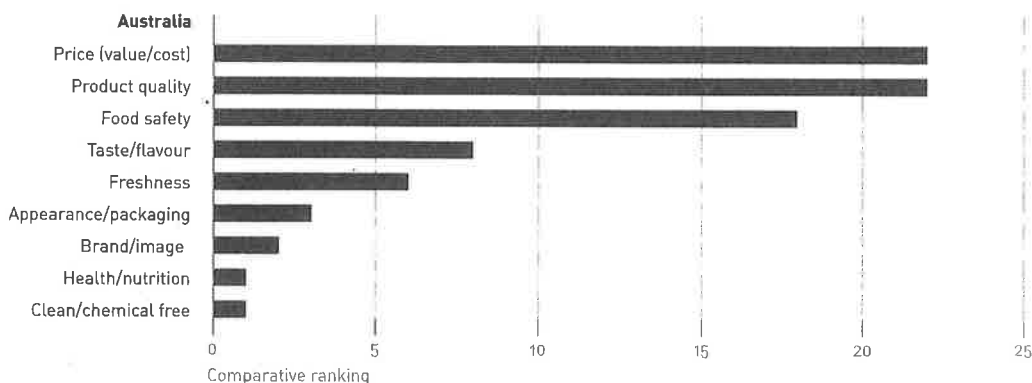
It is also important to realise that consumer behaviour changes over time as their knowledge and incomes increase and social influences change.



Modern consumers have a wide choice in what is available to them but are discerning in what they purchase. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Food attributes influencing consumer purchase decisions (as nominated by market)

SOURCE: BEYOND PRICE AND QUALITY, DEPT OF RURAL AFFAIRS, VICTORIA, 2004



Thought Challenge #11

Much is made of the 'carbon footprints' that are generated as a consequence of shipping fresh produce from distant producers.

The reality is that sea freight is highly efficient and carbon footprints for many products can be predominantly from inefficient production practices, road transport through distribution chains and inefficient consumer behaviour. Fruit and vegetables shipped from the Southern Hemisphere to Europe often have smaller carbon footprints than similar produce grown and then carried by road transport within the EU. In some instances the consumer makes a larger carbon footprint after purchase, for example by driving to a supermarket to purchase a single product.

Q. Are consumers aware of where carbon footprints occur – or do they solely think in terms of freight from another continent?

Consumer trends

- A consolidation of consumer trends identified from several sources leads to the following conclusions:
 - Consumers will continue to seek products that are healthy, convenient, providing good value for money
 - As incomes rise, consumers will look for excitement and difference in food experiences and will allow themselves to indulge in the tastes and flavours of new foods from different countries and regions of the world
- Consumers seek products that will aid them in disease prevention, self-treatment for health, appearance and general wellbeing, and risk prevention
- Purchasing decisions will be influenced by labels such as 'SuperFoods', 'nutrient dense food' or 'high density foods' all of which have a connotation of specific high concentration health-conferring beneficial attributes.



The range and diversity of fruit and vegetables available to consumers continues to increase. (Left) cheirimoya (custard apple) and (right) jalapeno peppers. PHOTO: D. KAP (RIGHT)

Consumer knowledge and demands – the future

Consumers of the future will be better informed and no less choosy than today. The internet will give them the opportunity to see what is available. Buyers of the future may survey a range of horticultural products on three dimensional screens and from those images decide to order produce to be delivered directly from wholesalers or growers.

The ability of enterprising growers to use technology and improved transport and presentation methods to access changing and faster channels to markets may change consumer preferences and lead to whole new industries.

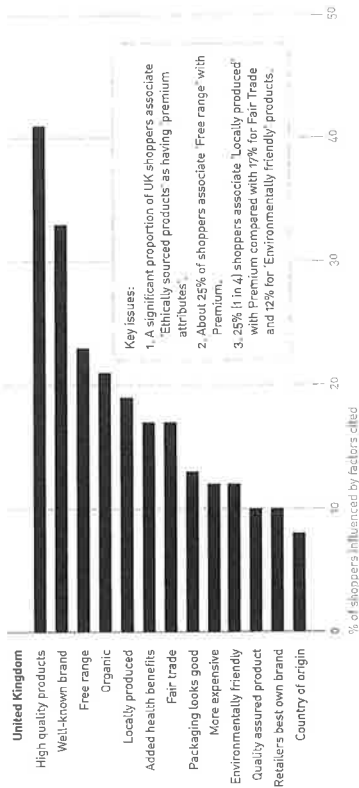
More effective production methods in developing countries and the migration of peoples to the developed world may give growers new opportunities to produce horticultural products, first to expatriates and then to the wider public. What was once exotic to some is becoming commonplace to many consumers.



Borough Market, London, UK

Food attributes influencing UK consumer purchasing

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM IGD GROCERY AND SHOPPER SURVEY 2007: "WHAT NEXT FOR PREMIUM?" (N=1,017 UK SHOPPERS)



Key issues:
 1. A significant proportion of UK shoppers associate 'Ethically sourced products as having premium attributes'.
 2. About 25% of shoppers associate 'Free range' with Premium.
 3. 25% (1 in 4) shoppers associate 'Locally produced' with Premium compared with 17% for 'Fair Trade' and 12% for 'Environmentally friendly' products.

Psychographics: consumer profiles

Psychographics, the study of shopper identification in relation to attitude to food, is a key part of the purchase equation. An IGD, Shopper Trends in Product and Store Choice, 2007 study offered the following profile:

Foodies – those who enjoy cooking, trying new things and cook meals from scratch (40%)

- Younger people, women, higher incomes.

Traditionalists – always eat the same thing, not adventurous with food choices (29%)

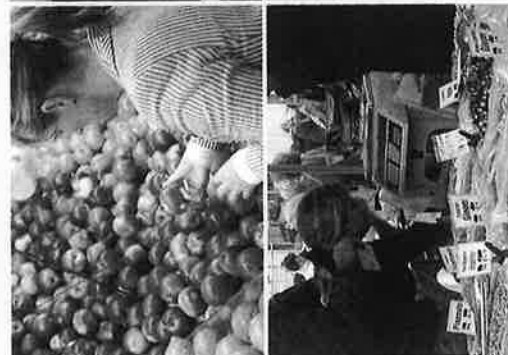
- Older shoppers, lower incomes.

Economists – shop to budget, interested in value for money (18%)

- More than 65 years young, limited incomes.

Fuelies – not interested in food, eat because they have to (13%)

- Males, low incomes.



Consumers vary widely in their purchasing behaviour. Above: typical shop goods buyer. Photos: University of California, Davis. Left: Kaur & Ganger, Borough Market, London, UK.