

IFMA WORLD

Market Research

Fresh/Organic Foods Still Hold Strong Consumer Appeal

Labels such as fresh, organic and healthy are powerful words in today's foodservice marketplace. Olson Communications, Inc. conducted the *Consumer Perspectives on Fresh Food* study in May 2007 to find out exactly what those labels mean to consumers and how their attitudes toward those products translate into purchasing decisions. An Internet survey of 297 consumers, the study gauged respondents' attitudes toward products labeled "fresh," "organic" and other similar terms.

The Results

The survey found that fresh foods are important to consumers, but that they are not always willing to pay more for those products. Eighty-five percent of consumer respondents identified "fresh" as a quality important to their food purchasing. (See bar graph below.) "Healthy" and "nutritious" also were cited by surveyed consumers as important qualities that influence their purchasing decisions.

When asked to define what "fresh" means to them, consumers assigned a wide range of positive attributes to the

label. "Healthy," "high quality" and "tastes best" were the most-mentioned descriptors of "fresh." Even with all the positive attributes consumers associated with "fresh," only 21 percent of those surveyed said they would absolutely pay extra for "fresh" products. (See pie charts above.) The majority of consumer respondents (70 percent) reported that

it would depend on the product, while 7 percent said they would absolutely *NOT* pay extra for products labeled as "fresh."

While products labeled "organic" are often closely associated with fresh and healthy products, the survey found consumers do draw some important distinctions. Respondents associated a wide variety of positive attributes to products identified as "organic," with the most-mentioned descriptor being

"environmentally friendly." However, both "expensive" and "healthy" were associated with "organic" by 45 percent of respondents. (Graph not shown.)

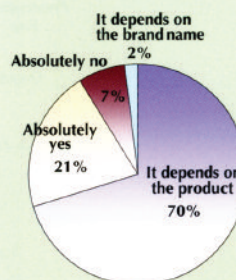
The survey also found that consumers were even less likely to pay more for "organic" products than they were to pay more for foods labeled "fresh." Only 8 percent of respondents said they would absolutely pay more for products labeled as "organic." (See pie charts above.) Almost half of those surveyed (49 percent) said they might pay more for foods identified as "organic," but it depended on the product. Forty-one percent of consumer respondents reported they would absolutely *NOT* pay more for "organic" foods.

According to the Olson survey, foods labeled "fresh" and "organic" continue to be a priority for today's consumer. However, the correlation between consumers' wants and their actual purchasing decisions is a tenuous one.

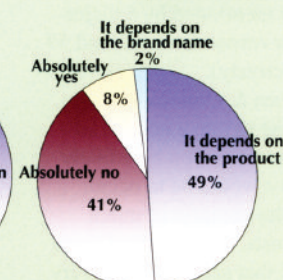
Editor's Note: For more on the survey, contact **Sharon Olson** at: (312) 280-4573. Or e-mail Olson at: info@olsoncom.com.

Consumers Hesitant to Pay More for "Fresh"/"Organic" Foods

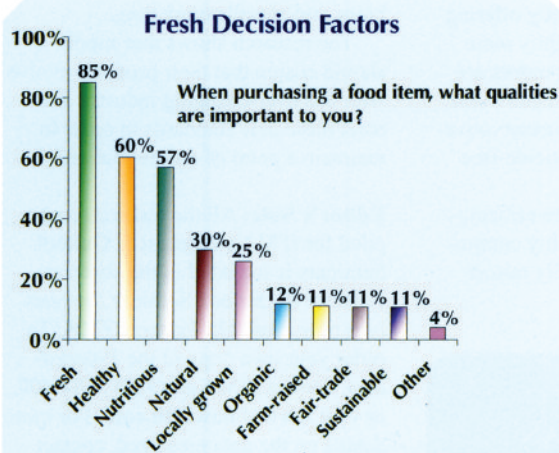
Are you willing to pay extra for "fresh" foods?



Are you willing to pay extra for "organic" foods?



Source: *Consumer Perspectives On Fresh Food Survey*, Olson Communications, Inc.



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