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Insights in consumer perceptions of fruits (organic and conventional apple) under different processing conditions (home-made, artisanal and industrial).

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Industrially transformed fruits have significant place in modern diets, with many benefits in shelf life increase, diversity of food offer and waste reduction. Fruits can also be processed by different unit operations and lead to different products (purée, juice, sorbet...). But, in a context of strong industrialization, homemade and artisanal products are more and more attractive for consumers, which convey in a more virtuous image of less processed and authentic products. Consumers are also looking for more natural, organic and local products. If the positive values of organic raw fruits by consumers are known, few studies are interested in fruit processing perceptions.

The main objective of this study was to understand consumer perceptions of fruits under different processing conditions: organic, conventional, home-made, artisanal and industrial. Different levels of apple processing (apple sauce, apple cider, apple sorbet) were targeted.

An online survey was conducted with 1000 French participants (>18 y-o) consuming fruits at least twice a week. They were divided into 4 categories: organic, conventional, local and organic-local consumers.

Results showed that for consumers, the main benefits of fruit processing are all year availability, fruit preservation and food waste reduction. The main perceived disadvantages are: additives addition, nutrients loss and packaging. Local origin is more important than organic label. For consumers, there is a big gap between industrial apple processing and artisanal and home-made processing. For example for applesauce processing, the main differences regarding industrial processing are: sugar, additives addition and cooking.

Unit operations are not well known, however organic, local and organic-local consumers are more familiarized with transformation steps than conventional consumers.

Taking into account consumers perception of fruit processing conditions, will make it possible the development of more suitable and sustainable offer adapted to consumer's needs. Further research should include product tasting in order to integrate sensory perception.

Keywords: Consumers perception, Processing, Fruits, organic, conventional, home-made, industrial, artisanal.

Category : Sensory and Consumer Science for Sustainability and Biodiversity

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