

**CONSUMERS' CONCERNS WHEN PURCHASING FRESH
VEGETABLES IN TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES : IMPLICATIONS FOR
EXTENSION PROGRAMS**

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Abstract

Some 130 persons in the Central region of Trinidad were surveyed using systematic random sampling to determine their concerns related to the production and purchasing of fresh vegetables. The study found that there were fairly high levels of concern about pesticide residues, GMO's and the quality of irrigation water used in vegetable production. Advertisement was the most important factor influencing purchasing decisions. There were some differences based on gender on the quality attributes of the products when purchasing (appearance, cleanliness, firmness) and on factors influencing their purchasing decisions (health benefits and flavor). Most respondents were willing to pay more for vegetables produced with a minimum or no pesticides.

Secondary data showed a low quantity of extension programs dealing with pesticide management and Good Agricultural Practices and recommendations included the need to increase greatly programming efforts especially those programs that use the Agro-ecosystem analysis (AESAs) component of Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

Key Words; Vegetables, Consumers, Pesticides, Extension Programs