

Consumers' perception of food packaging in Trinidad, West Indies and its related impact on food choices

Angela Peters-Teixeira¹ and Neela Badrie²

¹ Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of the West Indies, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

² Department of Food Production, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of the West Indies, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate consumers' perception of food packaging and its impact on food choices. The study population comprised 82 people who were ultimately consumers of packaged food products. The sample was drawn from six major supermarkets located in different geographical areas in Trinidad, West Indies. Data collection was carried out by using a questionnaire based on five topics: visual impact or attractiveness of the packaging; type of packaging material; labelling and nutritional information; new products; and fruit preserves. The packaging feature that influenced most of the respondents' choice of products was information on the label (41.5%); it was followed by quality and type of packaging (24.4%), brand name/popularity (22.0%) and visual impact (12.2%). When asked if they would purchase a product that was most attractively packaged, 85.4% responded in the affirmative. Most respondents (92.7%) believed that packaging material could adversely affect the quality of performance of a food product. Also, 92.7% of respondents agreed that nutrition information should be shown on all food products, although 36.6% admitted that they do not read the label because of its complexity. Influence of gender was not significant ($P < 0.05$) on consumer perception of food packaging and on food choices. Although the sample was small, the data highlighted the need to educate consumers of packaged foods, so that informed decisions could be taken in respect to food quality, safety and nutrition.

Keywords Consumers' perception, food choices, food labelling, packaging features, product features, Trinidad, West Indies.

Correspondence

Neela Badrie, Department of Food Production, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies. E-mail: nbadrie@yahoo.com or badrie@carib-link.net