

Title Risk Perception of Selected Postharvest Handling Techniques among Consumers of the Republic of Korea

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Abstract

Consumer anxiety about food safety has resulted from periodic food-borne disease outbreaks. In some cases, the harvested produce is safe and becomes contaminated during postharvest handling, while sometimes the contaminated produce mixed with unaffected produce spreads the pathogens. The purpose of this poster is to illustrate consumer risk perception of various postharvest handling procedures using survey data obtained from 1,100 Korea women in 2007. The respondents were primary meal preparers and resided in seven major urban areas of the Republic of Korea. Respondents were presented with statements about risk perception including: food containing allowable amount of pesticide residue, have been irradiated, have been irradiated to prevent spoilage, have been fumigated to kill insects and raw fruits or vegetables containing soil particles. The selected procedures are relevant for the international trade in fruits and vegetables and, therefore, of particular relevance because consumer reaction towards contaminated imported foods may be different from the similar perception of foods of domestic origin. The summary of the results shows that the perceptions of risk associated with the five different issues differed. The use of irradiation was generally perceived as posing the most risk, while the presence of soil particles in raw produce were not perceived as risky by the majority of respondents. Consumers can be profiled using the demographic and socio-economic characteristics and opinions about food with regard to the intensity of risk perception regarding the discussed five issues. The results provide insights useful to food growers, marketers, and policy decision-makers.