

Title Understanding consumers' preference for fresh table-ripe papaya
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Abstract

Papaya is one of the major fruit produced and consumed in the Philippines. The economic and market prospect for the fruit look bright with growing demand in domestic and international markets because of its health benefits. However, to capture bigger share and remain viable in today's competitive market firms in the papaya value chain need to continuously innovate. To do this, firms should understand consumers' demand and preferences. To prepare an action plan for improvement of the country's papaya value chain, a consumer survey was conducted to determine papaya consumers purchasing pattern, their desired papaya quality attributes, and factors affecting purchase decision. A total of 232 papaya consumers participated in the study mostly women and within the age range of 40-59 years. Respondents were resident and employees in Metro Manila and Laguna [Philippines]. Majority buy papaya for health and nutrition reasons. The external attributes consumers looked for in papaya are medium sized-fruit, full yellow peel color, and blemish- and disease-free. For internal attributes, most prefer papaya with yellow orange pulp color and average sweetness and texture. Overall, respondents indicated that presence of decay, damage, sweetness, maturity, texture and price are the topmost considerations in purchasing. Majority (61.7%) of the respondents are satisfied with the quality of purchased papaya. With the presence of other fruits, 91.7% are still willing to buy papaya mainly for their health benefit and 87.3% are willing to pay more for good tasting papaya. In their future purchase, consumers wanted papaya with guaranteed sweetness, not artificially ripened, with desirable texture even after refrigerated storage with no bitter taste and more mature fruits. The outcome suggested that a market exist for a high quality, locally grown, blemish-free papaya even at a higher price. Thus, the future activities of the stakeholders along the chain should be towards the attainment of these qualities.