

Title An effective sensory quality system for fresh produce
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Abstract

Ever since man started trading on a commercial scale, some type of “specification” has been required against which the quality (expected or implied) of the goods can be measured. In today’s global food markets these product specifications have become an integral part of a company’s quality assurance program. Specific information relating to legal aspects, packaging, microbial safety, ingredients, weight, nutritional content, etc are usually detailed at length but the sensory component in many cases remains poorly defined and open to individual interpretation. Why is this? There are many common challenges and issues that face the implementation of a practical and reliable sensory quality program, for manufacturers and suppliers across the food industry but those who provide fresh produce have additional factors to consider. Seasonal factors and growing region in particular require extra consideration when sensory quality targets are being defined and set. The importance of visual defects, both type and quantity, are also key in specifying the quality that will be acceptable to the marketplace. This presentation will discuss these and other issues and look at how to define and implement an effective sensory quality system for fresh produce with the focus on consumers’ needs.