



Produce Marketing Association

Mail: PO Box 6036 • Newark, Delaware 19714-6036 • USA

Address: 1500 Casho Mill Road • Newark, Delaware 19711 • USA

Phone: +1 (302) 738-7100

Fax: +1 (302) 731-2409

www.pma.com



NEWSFLASH

June 6, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT: Lee Mannering
LMannering@pma.com, +1 (302) 738-7100

New PMA Research Finds Varying Consumer Perceptions, Expectations for Loose and Pre-Packaged Produce

Newark, Del. -- New consumer research from the Produce Marketing Association has found that, while consumers purchase loose fruits and vegetables because they believe these items are fresher and of better quality, they also feel that pre-packaged produce is safer and more sanitary. Thirty-five percent of consumers said loose produce items make up between 76 to 100% of their fresh produce purchases, while 42% said pre-packaged items make up less than 15% of their purchases. Pre-packaged salads were excluded from this report, titled *Produce Packaging: Preferences and Buying Behavior*. It is PMA's first in-depth consumer study as part of the association's ongoing market research programs. The study was sponsored by Hays Container Services.

The report, unveiled at PMA's Retail Produce Solutions Conference in La Quinta, California, was conducted for PMA by Opinion Dynamics Corporation. The results are statistically valid within a 4% margin of error and carry a 95% confidence level.

"As consumers include more fruits and vegetables as part of delicious meals and healthful diets, it's important to monitor their needs and expectations. This report explores key trends that will help suppliers and their supply chain partners better understand packaging preferences and consumer perceptions of freshness, quality, and safety as they relate to loose and packaged produce. PMA members have told us that keeping abreast of consumer needs are a critical part of their organization's success, profitability, and strategic planning. This report is just one piece of the informational and educational resources PMA offers. We are committed to giving our members the tools they need to increase consumption," said PMA President Bryan Silbermann. The survey also found that:

- While 72% of primary shoppers surveyed said loose produce "delivers consistently better quality and taste," 51% of these same shoppers described

packaged produce as “more sanitary,” while 41% described packaged produce as being “safer.” The reason for this is that consumers feel loose produce is “handled” more often at the store.

- Smaller, more flexible packages are preferred more than larger, rigid packages. The reasons given for flexibility were being able to “see” and “feel” the produce, as well as ease of storage. Reasons given for smaller packages related to household size, with 52% saying they purchase produce for a smaller family, and 28% saying that larger packaging may spoil too quickly.
- Package design plays a key influencing role in produce purchase decisions. Eighty-four percent of consumers said a transparent design allows them to see what they are purchasing.

Available electronically as a PDF document, the report is available to PMA members for \$199. The nonmember price is \$799. In addition, as a value-added bonus, the retail labeling research PMA conducted earlier this year is included in the study. To order the report, contact the PMA Solution Center at +1 (302) 738-7100.

The Produce Marketing Association (PMA), founded in 1949 and based in Newark, Delaware, is a not-for-profit global trade association serving over 2,400 members who market fresh fruits, vegetables, and related products worldwide. Its members are involved in the production, distribution, retail, and foodservice sectors of the industry. PMA's core purpose is to sustain and enhance an environment that advances the marketing of produce and related products and services.

#####