



Produce Marketing Association

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NEWSFLASH

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New PMA Consumer Research Examines Seasonality, Supermarket Produce Purchases; Survey Finds Opportunities to Enhance Freshness Perception at Retail

Newark, Del. -- A recent national omnibus survey of 900 U.S. consumers has revealed that more than half of consumers (54%) choose supermarkets as their most likely point of purchase for fresh fruits and vegetables during peak growing seasons in their regions. Thirty-seven percent of consumers said they prefer to buy their produce from local farm stands or small fruit and vegetable stores during peak seasons; 76% of this group also believe the produce sold at these outlets to be fresher than that sold at supermarkets. Interestingly, 58% of consumers said they are most likely to purchase fresh produce from supermarkets because of the convenience factor, while 22% said they purchase produce from local farm stands or small stores for this reason.

The survey, conducted by Opinion Dynamics Corporation in late July, was sponsored by the Produce Marketing Association as part of the association's ongoing research on consumption and consumer perceptions. The survey had a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/-3%.

"This survey shows that opportunities exist, particularly during peak growing seasons, for retailers and their suppliers to more effectively market the freshness of the products they sell. Consumers have distinct perceptions of what they believe to be fresh, and delivering consistent quality and taste will only help to increase consumption and retail sales. We will be addressing this and other consumer trends during a special 'state of the industry' session at the Fresh Summit in Anaheim this October," said PMA President Bryan Silbermann.

The PMA research also discovered that the taste and consistent quality of fresh fruits and vegetables play a key role in determining where consumers shop. While a majority of respondents (53%) said they have not ever switched supermarkets for better

tasting and more consistent quality of produce, a surprising 45% said they have made that switch. Fifty percent of women and 39% of men said they have changed from one supermarket to another based solely on the consistency and quality of fresh produce. On average, half of consumers aged 30 to 64 have switched stores for better fruits and vegetables. Those less likely to switch are consumers under 30 and those aged 65 and older.

PMA members interested in conducting consumer surveys through Opinion Dynamics Corporation can do so via the *PMA Advantage: Market Research* program. Members receive substantial discounts on the full range of ODC research services, including omnibus surveys, a bi-weekly nationwide polling of 1,100 primary shoppers, as well as mail, Internet, and telephone surveys and focus groups. PMA members will be able to gauge product performance in the marketplace; test customer satisfaction; and receive actionable data that will accelerate their decision-making processes.

Members who want more details about the *PMA Advantage* program should visit the PMA Web site at <http://www.pma.com/product/Marketresearch> or contact the PMA Information Resource Center at +1 (302) 738-7100, e-mail infoctr@pma.com.

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.

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