

# Organic Taste – ECROPOLIS

## Sensory Properties in the Marketing of Organic Products

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### Initial Position

Distributors and promoters of organic food claim superior tastes for their products compared to the conventional alternative. This argument however is still subject to a hard debate and thus deserves more scientific evidence. Since repurchases are dependent on the overall liking of a product, and sensory experiences may have an important impact, knowledge about these dimensions is crucial for producers and marketers of organic food to offer products which meet consumer expectations.

### Methods

Qualitative consumer research: The main emphasis in the focus group interviews lies on exploring preferences for specific sensory properties, such as taste, texture or colour of a number of organic food products.

In the quantitative consumer research a new consumer typology will be developed in order to define different target groups (Figure 2). Personal interviews will be conducted using standardised questionnaires with 300 consumers in each of the participant countries. The market segmentation will be performed through multivariate methods such as cluster or latent class analysis, with the general sensory preferences and importance measures as cluster building variables.

Sensory profiles of selected products from six categories, i. e., meat products, dairy products, bakery products, tomato products, vegetable oil and fresh fruit, will be developed. The statistical data will be presented in form of spider web diagrams (Figure 3) to achieve clear descriptions of the sensory properties and to reveal the differences in the various products.

Parallel consumer sensory studies will be carried out as acceptance tests with subgroups of regular and occasional buyers of organic food to evaluate their sensory preferences. In order to gain information about the impact of the organic image on the sensory perception, the sensory acceptance tests will be carried out as blind and branded tests.

The sensory and consumer studies will be combined to a preference mapping through multivariate analysis.

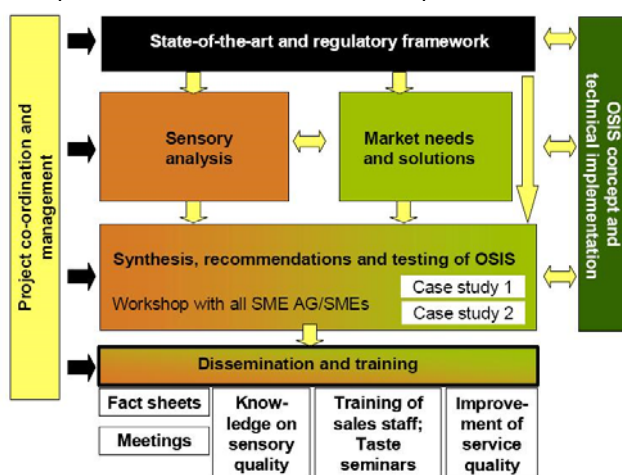


Figure 1: Project structure

### Aim

The main purpose of this EU funded project (Figure 1), that started in January 2009 and will last three years, is to develop the first Organic Sensory Information System (OSIS), a multilingual and centrally based data folder for data deposition along with an interface scheme that serves as a basis for data exchange to the benefit of the organic food market (organic associations, producer, processors, retailer, wholesaler as well as consumers).

The extendable data folder will contain descriptions of sensory properties of specific products from six product categories (bakery products, meat, apples, yogurt, native plant oils, ...) as well as information about underlying production methods which explain the sensory differences between organic and conventional products as well as consumer expectations.

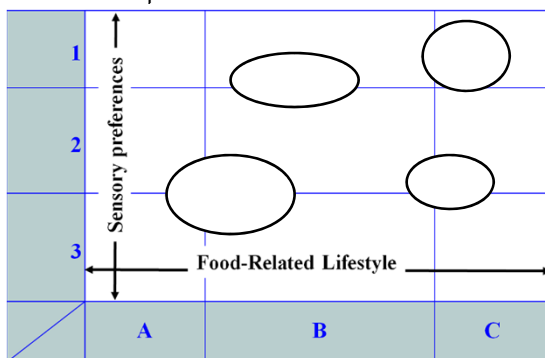


Figure 2: A Sensory-based consumer typology

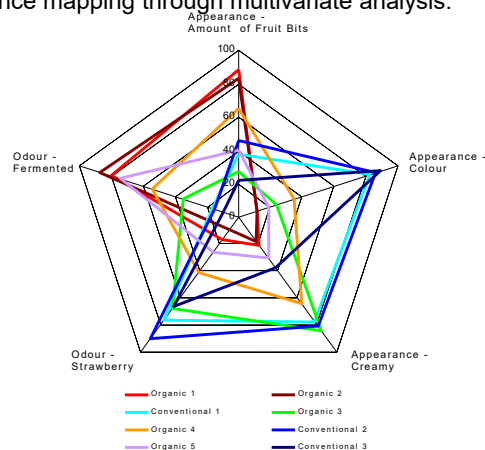


Figure 3: „Spider web“ diagram with selected descriptors for strawberry yogurt

### Further Approaches

Comprehensive dissemination and training activities, including the preparation of training materials for all stakeholder groups involved as well as for sale staff, will ensure the broad information of the organic food market. Over the project duration, notes on the progress will be put on the project website.

Further results will be presented little by little at different conferences and published in diverse journals.

