

**THE FRESH FRUIT CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN GERMANY:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH NON-SEASONAL STRAWBERRIES**

**JORGE ALBERTO CASTEDO VALDES
MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc.) IN INTERNATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES**

ABSTRACT

The imported fresh fruit in Germany is the major quota in the market, consumers have many choices from different origins. However, some fruits like Berries are considered as seasonal fruits and also part of the domestic production. Strawberries is the most important fruit of the berries group, this special fruit is considered healthy, convenience and easy to eat, but domestic supply is only in few months during the year (May, June and July). The non-seasonal strawberries are also being introduced from different provenance, the major supplier is Spain. A previous analysis about seasonality was made using the twelve months of the year grouped in 3 factors (Seasonal, non-seasonal and intermediate or late seasonal) to find the seasonality of strawberries according to the consumers opinion. Further, the study use a new methodology to measure the non-seasonal consumer behaviour using as a base the Food-Related Lifestyle methodology and adding new dimensions such as : expected quality of the fruits , environmental issues, emotional aspects and country of origin. The new theory involves 9 dimensions. The sample was taken from a panel data with N=558 in all Germany, finally the main Factor Analysis is run and new model proposed to explain the non-seasonal behaviour of the German strawberry consumer. The opinion's consumer says that quality of the strawberries is mainly defined by taste and sweet. The proposed model to explain the non-seasonal buying behaviour used the "Expected quality of the non-seasonal strawberries", "Origin of the nonseasonal strawberries", "Emotional aspects", "Food preparation scripts" (FRL-Dimension 3) and "Usage situations" (FRL-Dimension 4) that were found significant variables (Factors). The German consumer consider that non-seasonal strawberries have to be similar in quality to the seasonal ones, origin is consider important, but the preference of a country is still neutral. Special emotional aspects are very linked to the strawberries such as summer time and memories of the childhood that influences in the buying behaviour Consumers are able to buy non-seasonal strawberries due to fast, easy

and avoiding to use knife and fork to eat them. The last significant factor is referred to processed strawberries (jelly, marmalades or compote) which also are part of the preference during the non-seasonal period in Germany. Frozen strawberries and environmental issues showed not significant variables for the analysis. The study shows that consumers with income over 2501 Euros per month and living in cities above 500 000 inhabitants are more likely to buy non-seasonal strawberries.