

CMD504

504 - Economic and Sensory Assessments of Taste and Credence Attributes of Canadian Organic Wheat Breads

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Research Summary

Currently, there is no published research comparing consumer demands for organic and conventional wheat grain grown in Canada when baked as bread. There is limited research on the effects of information about organic production on Canadian consumer willingness to pay (WTP) and perceptions of organically produced grain products. The few economic studies to date that have assessed demand for organic products have not utilized the effects of information about organic production, nor have they included information on sensory perceptions of the products on WTP estimates. This study will estimate consumer WTP for breads baked from organic and conventionally produced wheat and assess the impacts of sensory attributes (e.g. colour, texture, taste, and aroma) and information about organic production, focusing on nutrition/health claims or environmental concerns as motivations for choosing organics on the WTP estimates.

Significance of Research

The Canadian organic industry, worth approximately \$1 billion annually, is expanding at about 20% per year (Lockie, et al. 2004; Vansittart 2002). The majority of Canadian organic wheat is produced in western Canada, much of which is exported to Europe, the US and Japan (Wasicuna and Harrison 2000). There are opportunities for local organic producers to market products in Canada and reduce the need to import processed organic foods. There is a growing trend of consumers WTP pay higher prices for what they feel to be a superior product (Thompson 2001). There are few well-conducted studies using the controlled paired-comparison procedures proposed here to accurately estimate the WTP for organic products. This research also has the potential to enrich economic methodologies that strive to determine demands for agricultural products by including sensory attributes. It also has potential to improve sensory science research methods by using proven economic methods to estimate WTP as well as the impacts of information on sensory perceptions.