Fruit Growers Willingness to Pay for Quality Attributes

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We elicited growers’ preferences for fruit quality attributes using a nationally representative sample of producers of five rosaceous crops, apple, peach, strawberry, sweet and tart cherry. Our results show that for fresh market fruits, flavor was clearly among the most important fruit attributes for four of those crops. For tart cherry, typically destined for the processed market, fruit firmness and color ranked as the two most important attributes. In addition to fruit flavor, apple growers were willing to pay higher price premiums for improved shelf life and crispness; peach growers for flavor, external color enhancement, and appearance; and strawberry growers for improved firmness, and color. Sweet cherry growers favored increased fruit size over fruit flavor, and also valued increased shelf life. Tart cherry growers most valued enhanced external color and firmness for processing purposes, a result consistent with the notion that tart cherry growers consider the processor, rather than the consumer, as their target market.

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