

Tree Fruit Extension Economics Research Highlight

Consumers' Preferences for Novel and Traditional Pear Varieties: Evidence from Sensory Evaluation and Willingness to Pay Elicitation

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This study responds to the need to figure out how people feel about new types of fresh fruits, like pears, to make sure they will be popular and profitable. This is important for the pear industry in the U.S. because they want more people to eat pears to enhance/improve the industry's economic prospects. To increase per capita consumption, we need to offer them pears that taste really good to them and that they are willing to pay extra money for. So, in this study, we are going to do two taste tests and ask people how much they would be willing to pay for two different groups of pears - some that are available early in the season and some that are available later in the season.

We found that the sensory quality attributes -especially taste and texture- are the main drivers for the WTP of the pear varieties. There were differences in the taste and texture attributes most liked for early and late-season pears. For the early-season pears, the higher the liking score for flavor, firmness, and juiciness, the higher the WTP. Whereas for the late-season pears, it was the entire set of quality attributes included on top of the overall appearance and sweetness. Consistently across the two groups, using social media to obtain information about pears leads to higher WTP.

Early-season varieties		Late-season varieties	
Pear variety	WTP (\$/lb)	Pear variety	WTP (\$/lb)
Bartlett	2.10	Paragon	2.19
573 ¹	1.92	Concorde	2.09
Seckel	1.89	D'Anjou	2.05
642 ^w	1.62	Comice	1.96
417 ^v	1.55	Gem	1.81
720 ^u	1.54	Bosc	1.69

¹ 573 is 'Bartlett' heritage, yellow-green pear with some blush, denser texture, and sweetness, 642 is a red-blushed hybrid nashi-type pear that is apple-like in taste, juicy and crisp texture, 417 is a proprietary pear variety, Asian/European cross, bright red color, crisp, juicy, low acid pear, and slightly sweet flavor, and 720 is 'Bartlett' heritage, numbered U.S. selection cross, large fruit, and yellowish skin with red blush.

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