

28/01/2013

USA: Organic demand to increase

by Dr John Paull



photo: Organic Trade Association

The demand for organic food will continue to increase driven by health conscious consumers, according to a new survey of 1500 US consumers. The 155 page report by Technomic Inc advises food service executives, operators and suppliers to "consider re-evaluating their product mix to appeal to this no-longer-niche market".

A key finding of the Healthy Eating Consumer Trend Report is that *"the vast majority [of consumers] say that health is a priority for them and they at least try to eat healthy most of the time"*. Most consumers recognised organic food as a healthy choice. Most men (64%) and most women (73%) described organic food as *"slightly or much more healthy"*.

The top four reasons that organic consumers (N=1211) nominated for choosing organic were:

- *"contain no pesticides"* (71%);
- *"produced without added hormones"* (70%);
- *"produced without antibiotics"* (64%);
- and *"contain no preservatives"* (64%).

However, the report found that *"Only half of consumers [54%] say that their grasp of the definition of 'organic' ... foods is good or very good"*. The report warns that: *"Suppliers and operators should not assume that all consumers understand the meanings behind descriptors such as organic ... When possible, marketing materials should help to further explain the sourcing and benefits of such ingredients in language that is easy to understand"*.

Technomic state that *"Not only are more consumers eating local, organic, natural and sustainable foods, but substantial percentages of those that do are eating these items"*

more frequently". In 2012, 35% of consumers reported eating organic at least once a week, up from 28% in 2010. For organic consumers, 32% report buying organic "*more often*", while 18% report buying organic "*less often*" compared to a year ago.

Price is still a sticking point for consumers. Just 11% of consumers said that they were willing to pay more than a 5% premium for organic, while a further 23% said they were willing to pay "*slightly more (up to 5% increase)*". Those who never purchase organic (N=289) said that it is "*too expensive*" (79%), that the "*benefits are not worth the extra cost*" (52%), and that they are "*confused about the health benefits*" (28%).

Technomic advise food service executives that: "*Consumers who favor organic and natural foods cite the absence of specific chemicals and preservatives as key drivers to purchase these items. Operators, specifically of limited-service restaurants, can likely drive sales and appeal to these consumers by embracing more ingredients that are free of chemical additives*".

TAGS: [healthy eating](#), [organic food](#), [consumer](#), [food outlets](#), [Technomic Inc.](#), [restaurants](#), [USA](#)

<http://oneco.biofach.de/en/search/news/usa-organic-demand-to-increase--focus--6a1c70fb-e449-4b9d-994f-8d4011a46267/>