

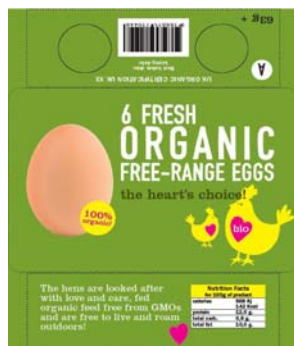
CORE Organic

CORE Organic Project Series Report

Deliverable no. 3 (WP4)

Elaboration and test of new communication concepts

FCP



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Executive Summary

A national public call to advertising companies for the production of a communication tool (product label) was used to test for the most promising national organicPlus arguments of WP 3 (Animal Welfare, Local Food Production and Fair Price) through Focus Group (FG) discussions (three FGs per country). Both FGs (consumer jury) and questionnaires were used to capture the variability of consumer reactions to the communication tools in the five different EU countries: Austria (AT), Germany (DE), Italy (IT), Switzerland (CH) and the United Kingdom (UK).

The organicPlus arguments were expressed in words, symbols and pictures on the egg labels. Later, to measure the effectiveness of the labels, a total of 18 FG discussions were held to investigate the consumer attitudes and preferences towards the advertising labels. To test the different egg labels, the consumer juries discussed the labels, after which the participants were asked to fill in individual questionnaires. These were designed to measure participant reactions and responses to the label arguments and their general attitudes towards advertising (Purvis and Mehta, 1995). After ten days, telephone interview were carried out that were designed to measure the participants' recall of the labels. Five different measures were used in the questionnaires to evaluate participants' attitudes towards the egg labels: emotional quotient (label liking), believability, effectiveness (willingness to buy), and recall, and a general measure of attitude towards advertising was also used.

Only organic egg consumers and buyers of organic eggs, as either regular or occasional, were included into the survey sample.

Although the intention of this advertising label test was to examine the organicPlus arguments via a common communication tool, the results provide a particularly dissimilar picture of participants' attitudes towards the egg labels across the five different EU countries. Although previously tested and selected by the research teams, the label layout, the graphical elements, and the colour of the labels were widely discussed by the FG participants. Most participants disliked the layout. This negative perception towards all of the labels could have biased the organicPlus argument perception analyses. What is quite clear that arose from the CH and DE discussions was that participants did not like to be emotionally touched by the labels/ arguments. The only particular wording that the participants from all of the countries liked to see on the labels was: '6 fresh organic free-range eggs', which made them trust the quality of the eggs.

The bad perception of the labels is confirmed by the emotional quotient and believability measurements of the organicPlus arguments. In some cases, translation issues and label style were the reasons behind the participants' bad opinions about the labels: many of the participants emphasised the unprofessional styles of the labels.

Animal Welfare was the most liked argument. Local Food Production was generally scored second. Fair Prices showed the lowest scores. Particularly in DE and CH, the participants complained about the lack of relevant information *versus* "empty and meaningless" label claims. Despite the generalised low level of liking of the labels, one communication concept (headline, body copy, and related symbols) for each argument was preferred (or less disliked) in all of the countries. Animal Welfare 1 was preferred to Animal Welfare 2, Local Food Production 1 to Local Food Production 2, and Fair Price 1 to Fair Price 2 (see Appendix A for description of the headlines and body texts).

In summary, most consumers:

- are not happy to 'support' farmers;
- are ready to treat cows "with love and care", but cannot associate strong emotional bonds to hens;
- are not happy with vague and overblown statements (100% organic), in all of the countries except IT;
- need to associate the term 'local' with a specific place;
- cannot positively associate the term 'tradition' with primary production, but only with processing methods.

The results support the use of a green label for organic egg packaging, while care needs to be taken with the addition of any extra organicPlus claims. Labels naively appealing to emotions were not accepted in most of the countries under scrutiny, while pure price information is not enough to promote some arguments, especially the Fair Price one, if the consumer cognitive dissonance is too high.

1 Introduction

Several studies have shown that consumers of organic food are willing to pay an additional price premium if ethical values that go beyond the mere organic standards are added to organic products, and if these values are well communicated. Holt (2006) showed that the additional association of organic with fair trade, e.g. bananas, increased consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for organic products. Grebitus et al. (2009) presented empirical evidence that when coupled, both fair trade and organic attributes increase WTP for coffee. Schmid et al. (2004) presented several examples of successful marketing initiatives aimed at directly supporting local and/or small farmers, in some cases located in disadvantaged rural areas.

Organic production with additional (ethical) values going beyond organic standards has been defined as an 'organicPlus' activity (Padel and Gössinger 2008). According to this definition, a promising argument had to refer to an 'organicPlus' activity and had to be verifiable.

1.1 Aim of the full research project

The overall objective of this research project is to analyse and test innovative communication strategies of organic companies as a means to reconnect organic farmers and consumers according to the varying cultural and behavioural backgrounds of consumers in five European countries. Many organic companies in Europe are currently deliberating on how to differentiate their products and services from the global organic market.

The results of a comparison of different communication arguments in five European countries will provide a valuable tool for organic farmers' initiatives for their strategic positioning in the organic market. The results will also be interesting for policy makers, to gain a better understanding of the country-specific attitudes of ethical consumers. Finally, this study offers an insight into the challenges of how to fulfil expectations for sustainable development of Europe.

The objectives are, in more detail:

- (i) to identify successful initiatives in each partner country and to analyse their communication strategies with the general public, with stakeholders, and particularly with consumers in a case-study approach;
- (ii) to test the most promising communication arguments in all of the partner countries using different methods;
- (iii) to develop and test new generic communication strategies as valuable tools for the strategic positioning of farmers' initiatives, following approaches to reconnect organic farmers and consumers.

1.2 Aim of this study

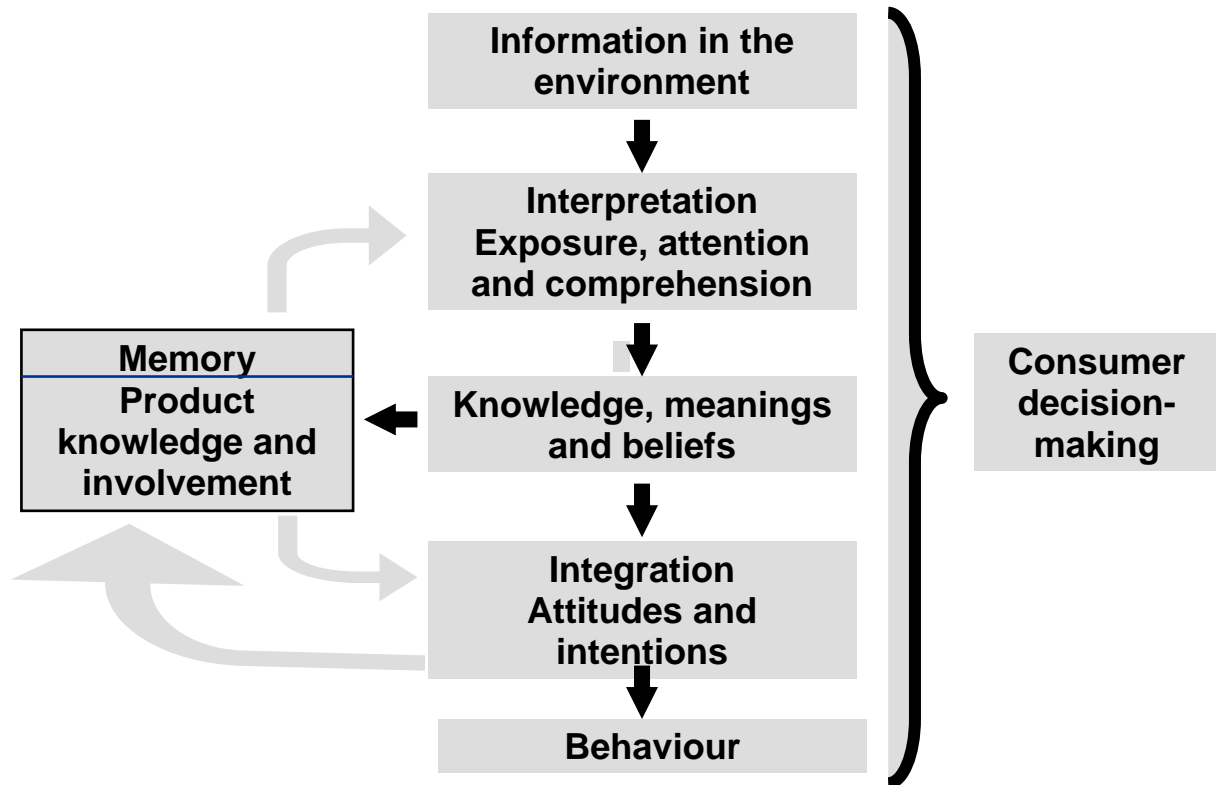
This study started from the result of previous research carried by the CORE ORGANIC FCP partnership through an Information Display Matrix (IDM) survey on consumers of five countries: Austria (AT), Germany (DE), Italy (IT), Switzerland (CH) and the United Kingdom (UK). This involved studying different 'ethical' arguments that were selected from those actually used by organic farmers and processors, to determine the three most-promising arguments to communicate organicPlus¹ values. These arguments were identified as: Animal Welfare, Regional/ Local Food Products, and Fair Prices to Farmers (Zander & Hamm, 2009).

To test a new communication concept regarding these 'organicPlus' arguments, a restricted public call for tender was made in December 2008, for the production of the communication tools. Nine advertising companies from UK, DE, AT and IT were invited to participate in the selection. The successful tender was received from Davide Cortesi (IT).

¹ OrganicPlus has been defined as "organic food with additional values going beyond organic standards" (Padel & Gössinger, 2008).

According to a model of consumer decision-making (Figure 1), attitudes and intention depend on an integration of meanings extracted from the comprehension of market stimuli to which the consumers are exposed and from previous beliefs and knowledge stored in the memory. Therefore, to gain insight into this previous knowledge, we asked the partners to provide us with an insight into the kind of egg labels that existed in their respective national organic markets.

Figure 1. A model of consumer decision-making



Source: Peter et al., 1999

1.3 Organic egg labels in the existing markets

In most of the countries, organic eggs have minimum animal welfare included, as this is required by the European regulations. Most labels show pictures of either eggs or hens, either as drawings or as real photographs. Some labels contain sketches of farmhouses or hens, and many report details and information on the producer, sometimes in separate leaflets included in the boxes.

According to a large number of authors, the product meaning is not apparent from the perceived product attributes themselves, but from what these attributes do for the consumer (e.g. Snelders et al, 1993). Gutman (1982) posited that these product consequences are instrumental for the consumer for the attaining of some desired end-state of being. In fact, the literature distinguishes between the utilitarian benefits and the symbolic and emotional associations that the product provides, a distinction that is often referred to as the 'feel/ think' dimension, after Vaughn (1980) and Ratchford (1987). The feel/ think dimension indicates to what degree a product is seen by the consumer with a 'cognitive' or with an 'affective' state of mind. According to Claeys, Swinnen & Vanden Abeele (1991), a 'think product' is bought for utilitarian, cognitive reasons. The attention given to a think product is given mainly to its functional performance, and consequently to its tangible attributes. 'Feel products', however, are desired for the possibility of their satisfying personal wants, and for their value expressiveness. These differences in characteristics between feel and think products can be related to

differences in the consumer–product interactions, and they have great relevance for marketing and advertising.

Some organic egg packages and labels are quite rational looking, especially those in supermarkets: clear typing, with information in Arial or Times characters, etc. They appear to target the ‘think’ dimension in consumer–product relations. Some packages use drawings instead of photographs to enhance the ‘old fashioned’ style of the packaging, and to give an image of traditional values and a ‘home-made’ product. They appear to be more consistent with the ‘feel’ product image. Figure 2 shows a sample of organic egg packages.

Figure 2. Examples of organic egg packages and labels

UK



AT



CH



DE



IT



Most labels are dominated by light colours, like yellow or green: green text and/or green decorative elements are generally used for almost all of the labels.

Among the sample of labels investigated, there were no particular indications of country-specific differences.

OrganicPlus aspects are mentioned in some countries. Toni's 'free-range' ('Freilandeier') eggs (<http://www.tonis.at>) in AT mention the support of small-scale agriculture, as well as genetically modified (GM)-free feed, while strictly linking the eggs to the farmer via a traceability scheme. Traceability for eggs is almost universally widespread, both via the simple EU coding scheme in force since 2004, where the eggs are stamped with a code identifying the establishment (production site), country of origin, and method of production (i.e. organic, free range, barn or cage). Some egg producers provide a website where to trace the names and addresses of the farmers, some others put a leaflet in the box, and others provide pictures of the farmer and their family, etc.

In DE, Ei.Q (<http://www.ei-q.com>: see Figure 3) aims at marketing high quality eggs as a good-taste produce from family farms with specific animal welfare conditions, like pasturing. The package is particularly distinguishable from the more ordinary egg packaging, and their values were simply summarised by the headline: 'Von Familien – für Familien.' (From Family (Farms) – to Families).

Figure 3. The German organic egg brand Ei.Q.



The country of origin of the eggs is sometimes mentioned. In DE, Biohenne mention the German origin directly in the label product-identification headline ('6 Deutsche Bio-Eier') (Figure 4). In the CH country report, local and regional denominations are mentioned in Switzerland as relevant, but in competition, rather than in association, with the organic label (Figure 5). In IT, one organic producer that mainly sells through specialised shops, has a special regional-labelled organic egg brand (Figure 6), while the mention with the COOP private-label eggs is in small typeset in the body text of the label, indicating that the hens are 'Italian'.

Figure 4. German-labelled organic eggs (source: Biohenne)



Figure 5. Conventional regional egg label 'from Argau'



Figure 6. Organic regional egg label 'made in Friuli'



Toni's, again in AT, is also marketing organic eggs from an ancient and rare hen breed that they have re-named 'Babette', which produce colourful eggs of green, pink or even blue. Here they use a new concept of packaging that is aimed at resembling a hand-made box with hand-written characters and with straw inside, as a 'feel' product, to imply local and traditional production. The colour of the box is again a deep, grass green (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Austrian rare-breed organic eggs



For the use of colour in egg packaging, Waitrose should be mentioned, which was recently under scrutiny for their organic Columbian Blacktail eggs that contain lead. These eggs come in a more 'conservative' packaging, while for their conventional eggs they like to attract consumers to the display using colourful packaging (see Figure 8).

Eggs are indeed a basic unprocessed product that consumers perceive as a commodity. The use of colourful and attractive packaging (as in the case of Ei.Q.) is intended as a 'feel' substitute for making the purchase a bit more exciting, given that there is not a lot that you need to know about an egg (the 'think' attributes), and so there is nothing particularly suitable for marketing innovation.

Figure 8. Waitrose colourful egg display



2 Methods

2.1 Theoretical background

An effective advertising message strategy should include the message idea, a headline, the body copy, and the creative format. The **message idea** (or argument) is the main topic or benefit to be communicated in the message. The argument can be substantiated in one or more **claims**, i.e. statements that are used in the body of the text that addresses some specific benefit to be gained from using the product; e.g. free from GM feed, free-range, locally produced, etc. The **body copy** (or copy text) is a written statement that fully describes the message idea; it constitutes the main copy block of an advertisement, as distinguished from headlines, subheadings, logo, illustrations, and the like. The **headline** is a sentence, phrase, word, or group of words that are set in large, bold type in a printed advertisement (in this case, the label). The purpose of a headline is to attract attention and usually to encourage the reading of the following copy. In print advertising, the headline is considered to be the most important element, because it invites the reader into the advertisement. The **creative format** is how the message idea is communicated to the target audience. This is the mix of graphical elements (illustrations), design, typeset, headline and body copy that conveys the message idea or argument.

All of the elements of the advertising message are intended to answer three main communication goals: Reminding, Informing, Persuading (RIP). The communication mix is planned in order to inform about the product. Persuasive communication increases consumer loyalty and preference for the product, and also reduces substitution strategies. Finally, the communication has to remind consumers about the product characteristics that are unique and that are strongly connected with the final goals and values of the consumers themselves (Zanoli, 2004).

In an international market, target consumers are often subjected to different cultural influences, and they reply to communication messages in different ways according to many variables. Culture and subculture are particularly relevant environmental variables, although it is well known that "measuring the content of culture is actually a tricky matter" (Peter et al., 1999). The reason for this is that our own culture is often used as a frame of reference, and this can lead to misinterpretation of the other cultures. This is very relevant when working in a multi-cultural, international study, and it has implications for both the researcher and the communication specialist. There are two basic approaches in consumer research when culture is involved, which are known as 'emic' and 'etic':

Emic research emphasises the uniqueness of each culture, and allows insight into a particular culture, but cannot be used for comparisons across cultures. Emic approaches involve using culture-specific symbolism, concepts and terms.

Etic research, on the other hand, aims at comparing different cultural settings, and therefore tries to use terms, concepts and symbols that will be common across the cultures to be investigated. Etic research can therefore be used for cross-cultural studies (Peter et al, 1999).

Focus groups (FGs) and other qualitative approaches have the advantage that they provide rich and redundant information, which thus reduces the danger of misinterpretation in a cross-culture context, and allows for a full account of cross-cultural differences in consumer perception of communication devices. At the same time, by using quantitative survey instruments, like questionnaires, even in a qualitative study, this can allow for tests of cross-cultural validity of these instruments as tools for measuring consumer values across cultures.

We therefore used both FGs and questionnaires to capture the variability of consumer reactions to a communication tool (product label) in five different EU countries.

2.2 Research methods

As the intention was to conduct an 'etic' study that allows for cross-country comparisons, eggs were chosen as the product to advertise; other products (e.g. milk or pasta) have different connotations and are perceived quite differently across the various EU countries.

To test the communication tool (the product label) that carried the deployment of the message idea (or the three different organicPlus arguments) on organic food products, a two-stage process was devised, as detailed and discussed here.

At the first stage, an advertising company that was selected via a public international call was asked to prepare proposals (creative formats) for a portfolio of six printed labels (two for each argument) in colour, to be composed of headline, body copy and symbolic images. Guidelines were provided to generate the advertising message, following a modification of Maloney's (1961) deductive framework. The organicPlus arguments – Animal Welfare, Regional/ Local Food Production and Fair Price – were expressed in words and symbolic graphical artwork on the egg labels. To make the labels as real and credible as possible, the companies were asked to draw the labels according to the actual dimensions of a six-egg package, and with all of the legal signs and writing required by each national law, on the basis of the partners' indications.

So as not to influence the consumers in the selection of their preferred creative format for each argument, a common design and background colour was selected for all of the six labels, and the same symbolism was used for each of the two competing creative formats for each argument. The cross-cultural project team selected the adopted homogeneous design and green background colour by a democratic vote across the five different combinations of design and colour proposed by the advertising company. This design was based on various 'heart' images, symbolising care, love and respect, as well as 'deeply felt' ethical values in all of the cultures involved in the study².

This imaging is 'reflected' in three graphical elements/ illustrations for each argument:

- the 'hearty hen' for Animal Welfare;
- the 'hearty farm/ region/ Earth' for Regional/ Local Food Product;
- a 'hearty farmer' for Fair Price.

After a briefing with the Italian research team, the advertising company proposed various communication concepts (headlines and body copy) that reflected the three organicPlus arguments. The claims substantiating the arguments were based on previous project results (Padel and Gössinger, 2008) and on the literature (Zanoli, 2004).

After discussion with partners, the combinations of headline and body copy were laid down to have comparable concepts and claims across the countries (see **Appendix A**³). As in any cross-cultural study, some adjustments in terms of wording were made to achieve equivalent comparisons. Although the intention of the advertising label test was to examine organicPlus arguments via a common communication tool, there were a lot of difficulties involved in creating a shared and consistent EU organic egg label layout across all of the countries, given the semantic issues and cultural differences across the five countries involved in the survey. The label layout, the graphical elements, and the colour of the labels proposed by the advertising company were in the first instance discussed by the research teams, without reaching full consensus, especially on the 'tone' of the texts. The CH and AT

² "The heart has long been used as a symbol to refer to the spiritual, emotional, moral, and in the past also intellectual core of a human being. As the heart was once widely believed to be the seat of the human mind, the word heart continues to be used poetically to refer to the soul, and stylised depictions of hearts are extremely prevalent symbols representing love." (Viswiki, 2009)

³ To have a common wording, all of the research teams collaborated with the advertising company to select the correct sentences and accurate translations in each language. The aim, also in this case, was to have comparable contents and labels. The headlines and the claims of each label were widely discussed and largely agreed on in all of the five countries. Due to cross-cultural differences, some country-specific translation issues had to be solved to make the labels more clear and understandable.

partners, in particular, had many reservations of the final output of the advertising company, but due to time and resource constraints it was not possible to further delay the field testing, nor to plan a second round of FGs to further refine the labels. The labels were designed to be consistent according to the different legal requirements in the different countries, so as to have reliable and trustworthy package labels. This is the reason why the final layout was slightly different in the different countries (e.g. in CH the national organic logo – the Knospe – was included instead of the EU logo). The nutritional label, and the bar-code were included in all of the labels.

Given the cross-cultural nature of this study, the labels (headlines and copy) were first developed in English and were then translated into German and Italian. Mother-tongue translators and research teams collaborated in the final definitions of the label contents, although some translation issues emerged in the field phase (see below). The various labels are shown in **Appendix B**.

At the second stage, for the measuring of the effectiveness of the labels, a total of 18 FG discussions were held in the five different countries – Austria (AT), Germany (DE), Italy (IT), Switzerland (CH) and the United Kingdom (UK) – to investigate consumer attitudes and preferences towards the advertising labels. In each country, three FG repetitions were held in the capital cities or in large metropolitan areas. The FGs were held on the basis of semi-structured guidelines prepared and tested by UNIVPM.

The investigations took place in two steps:

In the first step, the recruited consumers were invited to participate in FG discussions to discuss the labels and to express attitudinal evaluations, first as a group, and then individually, through a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. FG participants therefore acted as consumer juries for the liking, believability and effectiveness of the labels.

The FGs explored consumer attitudes in three steps. First, off-the-top-of-the-head (immediate) statements on the advertisements were elicited, to explore the **recognition** of the communication arguments and the respective claims of each of the six labels. Secondly, the labels were shown paired per argument (two at a time), to explore the **liking and preference**⁴ of the communication concepts proposed. Finally, the **effectiveness** of the communication was explored by asking the participants which one of the labels – paired per argument (two at a time) – might influence them the most in their buying of the product.

After the FG discussions, the participants had to complete the paper-and-pencil questionnaire that was aimed at measuring their general attitudes towards advertising (Purvis and Mehta, 1995) and, specifically, their Emotional Quotient Scale towards each label (Wells, 1964), as well as the label believability (Beltramini, 1982).

In the second step, a recall survey was carried out by individual telephone interviews with the participants on the consumer juries that occurred 10 days after the FG discussions had taken place. This telephone survey was aimed at testing which arguments were retained by the consumers, and which were related to 'value messaging', i.e. the communication of the claims.⁵ First unaided and then aided **recall** was elicited.

⁴ Just after the recognition step, two paired labels with the same organicPlus argument were shown again. To investigate their cognitive attitude towards the label, the participants were asked to select the 'label they do prefer/like the most', and to specify the reason. They had to express any thoughts or comments they might have about the labels, particularly anything they especially liked or disliked (graphical element [illustration], headline, body copy/ copy text, claims they think the most convincing and the least convincing).

⁵ Traditionally, recall questions were more connected with functional benefits than values, and in this study, the labels aimed to communicate claims that substantiate ethical values. Therefore, the recall survey was aimed at checking the recall of values more than of benefits. An emotional bond can be assumed to be stronger if the recall of such values is correct.

A discussion guide, questionnaires and complete moderator guide (research package) were developed and tested in a pre-test FG session carried out in Italy. After further discussions with the partners, the final qualitative 'research package' was released in English and translated into Italian and German.

2.3 Data collection

The FG discussions were carried out through March and April, 2009, in five countries (AT, CH, DE, IT, UK). Each FG lasted approximately 2 hours. A series of 3 repeat FGs were held in each country. In IT, an extra set of FGs was held by recruiting consumers who usually had their lunch in public canteens where organic food was provided (in the following, we refer to these FGs and consumers as IAMB).

Convenience sampling according to specified quotas was used in all of the five countries. Recruitment was on the basis of a specific screening questionnaire: the selection of participants followed a common scheme in all countries. The quotas – to be applied to each FG – were as follows:

- only organic egg consumers and buyers, as either regular or occasional organic egg consumers (no non-organic consumers, no non-egg consumers/ buyers were included into the samples);
- aged between 25 and 65 years: 50% between 25 and 45 years, 50% between 46 and 65 years;
- gender: 1/3 male, 2/3 female ;
- employment: at least 1 participant per FG should be unemployed/ student/ housewife (but no more than 1/3 of participants per FG);
- all as the buyers responsible (or co-responsible) for household food purchases;
- not employed in the agricultural industries (farmers or growers).

Customary exclusion criteria ruled out participants employed in the food industry/ food processing, in market research companies, and those who had been interviewed on food products in the previous 6 months.

In total, 156 consumers participated in the FG discussions (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sample description

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Age</i> <i>25 – 45</i>	<i>Age</i> <i>46 – 65</i>	<i>Full or part-time</i> <i>employed</i>	<i>Not</i> <i>employed</i>
AT	24	13	21	16	17	20
CH	20	8	12	16	22	6
DE	14	14	14	14	20	8
IT	18	12	15	14 ¹	21	9
UK	23	10	16	17	28	5
Total	99	57	78	77		

¹One respondent did not want to give her age.

In AT, the employment quota was partially unfulfilled, since the majority of participants were unemployed. Some problems emerged in DE, where in some FGs the colour of the labels as shown from the beamer did not match the colour printed in the portfolio, and in the UK the audio recording partly failed in two groups, although detailed notes were kept.

The FG discussions were recorded⁶ and transcribed. Due to the simple structure of the FGs, which were aimed at eliciting consumer attitudes to the proposed stimuli, the analysis was transcript and note based, and performed by each partner on the basis of a common reporting structure and guidelines. The data collected by the paper-and-pencil questionnaires and by the recall telephone survey was entered into a common database and analysed was by means of a standard statistical package (SPSS Statistics 17.0). Therefore, four country reports, plus a special report on Italian organic canteen consumers, and the statistical analysis form the basis of this final report.

2.4 Operationalisation of scales

Five different measures were used in the questionnaires to evaluate participant attitudes towards the egg labels.

Attitude towards advertising. A 5-item scale developed by Mehta and Purvis (1995) was used to measure the participants' perception towards advertising in general.

Emotional quotient (Label liking). A 12-item scale previously used by Wells (1964) was applied to investigate the affective/ emotional attitudes towards the labels. Responses were in terms of a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' (scored 1 and 5, respectively).

Believability. A 10-item scale as proposed by Beltramini (1982) was aimed at measuring the perception of label believability. The scale was measured as a semantic differential, ranging from 1 (Unbelievable) to 5 (Believable).

Effectiveness. A direct question, included in both the post-FG questionnaire and the recall questionnaire, was used to measure participants purchase intentions with respect to organic eggs in the week AFTER having seen each of the labels. Purchase intention was measured with a score ranging from 1 to 5 (1, I will certainly increase the number; 5, I will definitely not increase the number).

Recall. Both unaided and aided questions were used to evaluate delayed recall, 10 days after the FG discussions.

All of the scales were tested for reliability by considering the internal consistency of the measures (Nunnally, 1978). The Attitude towards Advertising scale did not pass the reliability test, as was expected given the low number of items (the original scale by Mehta and Purvis was not reliable either). An aggregated score was not computed for this reason. However, statistics on the individual items show that participants generally considered advertising informative, although most products did not perform as well as the claims, and therefore they failed being a 'quality assurance' tool. Looking at advertisements appeared to be liked by most participants, although they considered advertising overload a disvalue (Table 2).

Table 2. Attitude towards advertising (%) – Full sample

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Total</i>
I like to look at adverts	7.8	35.8	22.9	20.7	12.8	100
Much advertising is way too annoying	42.4	29.9	14.7	7.9	5.1	100
Too many products do not perform as well as is claimed in the adverts	23.0	49.4	21.9	3.4	2.2	100
On average, the quality of brands that are advertised is better than of brands that are not advertised	2.2	10.7	36.5	32.6	18.0	100
Advertising helps me keep up-to data about products and services that I need or would like to have	11.8	38.8	24.7	15.2	9.6	100

⁶ In the UK, due to technical problems, the recordings were lost.

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the Emotional Quotient (EQ) and the Believability scale for each argument, for all of the countries. Values above 0.7 were considered reliable. Some differences emerge, and all of the scales are reliable (Table 3) in almost all of the countries (not reported here).

Table 3. Reliability of scales per argument (Cronbach Alpha)

<i>OrganicPlus arguments</i>	<i>Animal welfare 1</i>	<i>Animal welfare 2</i>	<i>Local 1</i>	<i>Local 2</i>	<i>Fair prices 1</i>	<i>Fair prices 2</i>
Emotional Quotient (12 item)	0.938	0.937	0.909	0.927	0.893	0.874
Believability (10 item)	0.923	0.926	0.926	0.923	0.912	0.908

The scales were computed by summing up all of the item scores⁷. For the EQ scale, the scores ranged between a minimum of 12 (maximum dislike) and a maximum of 60 (maximum positive attitude), while a score of 36 represented the boundary between liking and non-liking. For the Believability scale, the scores ranged between 10 (unbelievable) and 50 (believable).

The recall questionnaire contained both unaided and aided recall questions. First, the interviewers asked open-ended questions to determine whether the consumers remembered the product under investigation and the themes/ arguments of the label advertisements. Secondly, the following list of claims was read to the consumers, who were asked if they remembered which were among those mentioned on the labels they had seen and discussed 10 days before.

1. GM-free feed	11. fair reward to farmers
2. egg size*	12. consumer's health**
3. animal welfare	13. animals live outdoor
4. free range	14. egg quality*
5. good working conditions for farmers**	15. environmental protection
6. local eggs	16. heart disease prevention**
7. food miles	17. heart's choice
8. egg colour*	18. love for own children**
9. egg shelf-life*	19. respect for farmer values
10. minimum transport & less pollution	20. slow food**

The claims indicated by * were of peripheral interest on the labels, in the sense they did not represent the main claims advertised in the headline and body text, although they appeared on the labels. The claims indicated by ** were totally missing on the labels. The consumers were then asked if they had purchased any eggs since the FGs, and if they were going to purchase them in the coming week. Finally, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the consumer perceptions as to how much their buying behaviour towards organic eggs had been influenced by the labels that they had seen and discussed in the FGs. The unaided recall questions were subsequently centrally coded using content analysis software (Text Smart), by clustering common terms on the basis of term frequency. Multiple coding was allowed for each of the consumers, but each of the consumer responses was assigned to at least one content code.

⁷ For items which had reverse statements, the scores were also reversed.

The codes were as follows:

Heart
Regional/ Local
Hen
Tradition
Environment Protection
Health
GM free
Animal Welfare
Free range
Farmer's support

3 Results

3.1 Label liking, believability and effectiveness

From the very beginning of the label testing, there was evidence of the broad cultural differences across the countries investigated with respect to advertising and to what is considered an acceptable label. Although at least three of the countries investigated (AT, CH, DE) should have shared similar cultural backgrounds and the same level of organic market development (Hamm and Gronefeld, 2004), they appeared quite different in both label layout perception and attitude towards the labels.

The results provide a picture of attitudes towards the proposed egg labels across the five EU countries investigated as part of this CORE ORGANIC project.

The FG discussions were aimed at providing rich qualitative information on the most preferred concepts and arguments in each of the countries. The paper-and-pencil questionnaires complemented this information. To investigate attitudes towards the advertising labels and the believability and effectiveness of these labels, t-tests were run on the measured scales to determine whether there were differences between the consumer juries in the five countries, and between the concepts/ labels.

3.2 Label liking

The label concepts were widely discussed by the FG participants. At first sight, the labels were perceived as unprofessional, kitschy and overblown by the CH and DE participants. This negative perception towards all of the labels resulted in a difficult interpretation of the outcome of the FG discussions, since the rejection of the labels and their concepts may have influenced the scoring of the arguments. The facilitators were actually not able to go beyond the negative attitudes of the consumer juries in all of the countries, to determine whether these also represented a rejection of the related argument *per se*.

In some cases, translation issues and the label styles partially justified the participants' bad opinions towards the labels: many participants emphasised the unprofessional style of the labels.

The labels were criticised in all of the countries, although to lesser extents in IT and AT. In CH and DE, however, this negative attitude towards the labels was reinforced by the fact that the participants clearly did not like to be emotionally touched by the labels/ arguments. Consumers in these two countries were more interested in the cognitive (think) aspects of the label than the affective (feel) ones: they mostly appreciated the amount of information given and the clearness of the labels. The reason for this is probably connected to a cultural, or 'emic', issue.

However, it is quite clear that the product itself – eggs – influenced the attitudes of the consumers towards the concepts and the underlying arguments. Eggs are probably seen as a 'commodity' even by organic consumers, and too much emphasis on ethical arguments and/or emotional marketing copies could have appeared strange and unusual to most of them. The one thing that the participants in all of the countries liked to see on the labels was the sentence: "6 fresh organic free-range eggs", which made them trust the quality of the eggs.

By analysing both the FG national reports and the questionnaires, *Animal Welfare* is by far the most preferred argument in all of the countries, even where the participants showed a clear dislike towards the labels overall (DE, CH, UK). *Regional/ Local Food Production* scored second in most countries, while *Fair Price* scored last. The lack of acceptance of this last argument might be caused by many issues. The first is that the participants particularly disliked these labels, both for their layout and for their content (copy and images). Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether the rejection was of the argument *per se* or of the way it was presented. Secondly, *Fair Price* is too generic to be accepted as an argument if it is not coupled with a clear identification of who the farmers are who will benefit from the extra income, and the reasons behind the need to support farmers by market prices. Results emphasise that communication of the *fairness* argument is a complex issue.

The success of the Animal Welfare argument, especially in the concept Animal Welfare 1, can mostly be ascribed to the body text content and the related claims, more than to the headline 'the heart's choice'. In the UK and IT, the sentence "The hens are looked after with love and care, fed organic feed free from GMOs, and are free to live and roam outdoors" was seen as a good summary of the important information that consumers prefer. In the remaining countries, the body text was not perceived as informative, while in all of the countries, the headline was judged too emotional and quite far from the consumers point of view.

By analysing the FG results in more depth, some lessons on what needs to be done to communicate OrganicPlus arguments for organic eggs can be learned.

Most of the participants disliked the layout. In general the green background, which is commonly perceived as related to an organic and natural product, appeared not to be appreciated in all of the countries. In DE, one consumer made a negative comment on the use of a bright and intense colour (like a soccer pitch): this could partially depend on problems with the printer and beamer, although the intensity of the colour was also discussed in the other countries. In CH, there was a discussion on what is 'organic green' and what is 'military green'. But "*green is typical organic*" [CHFG2.17M]. In the UK, the green colour was widely accepted, apart from some concerned comments about the dye that would be needed, since the ink is perceived as polluting.

IT and AT participants had more positive attitudes towards the green colour and the overall layout. The green colour evoked nature and associations with organic farming: "*the green colour of the pack is somewhat relaxing... it reminds me of the grass, the countryside in the open air, and is something related to nature*" [ITFG1.3M]. As we have seen, green (of various shades, but generally of a light colour) is the prominent colour in current labelling and packaging in all of the countries. In IT, the full green label was seen as distinguishable from all of the ones currently on the market: "*Compared to other packaging in a supermarket, it is immediately clear that the product is organic... all other packages are white or greyish, this green one that attracts attention*" [ITFG3.4F].

Only after the colour did the participants pay attention to the graphical element (the overall 'pink heart' theme, associated with yellow artwork – two hens for Animal Welfare, a big heart/ Earth for the local theme, and a sketched farmer for fairness) and the illustration (the picture of a big egg). The bright pink and yellow colours used in the graphical elements were all seen as unnatural in the UK, where the heart theme was associated with heart health. The theme aroused a lot of discomfort in CH too, where it was associated with Intellectual Property campaigns. The brown egg colour was appreciated in AT, since it was seen as more 'natural' and therefore rather organic. On the other hand, some DE participants were critical even on this point: "*... this egg is offensive because of its colour. It reminds me of 'Fleischwurst'* [a type of German sausage]." [DEFG 3.2F]. In most of the countries, the majority of the participants mentioned that they would prefer to see photographs of real hens instead of eggs on the label. Most felt that the sketched cartoon hen was 'childish' and unattractive, while others actually liked it.

The artwork from the advertising company was not liked in general in CH, DE and the UK, since the naïve cartoons and the design was seen as not for adults, but for children. "*The hens below with the funny little hearts [...] you cannot take it seriously*" [CHFG1.1F]. In CH, this may have somehow been dependent on the composition of the FGs, since convinced organic consumers were over-represented in the participants recruited. Besides, the 'think' dimension appeared to be the preferred one by most of the participants in all of the countries, with the exception of IT and, partially, AT. Little additional information was sought, especially by the committed consumers, and they did not appear willing to be touched emotionally, either by design or text, and especially by what appeared to them as undisguised aggressive advertising.

For the Animal Welfare argument, the 'two hens with the heart' produced mixed reactions among the participants. In IT and AT, it was generally liked, although some participants would have preferred real photographs of hens. In CH, it was dismissed as being too 'childish'. In DE, some of the participants like the two hens, especially when the differences in size were more marked (Animal Welfare 1). However, they would have been much better without the hearts inside. In the UK, the

writing 'BIO' on one of the little hearts was further misleading to the consumers, towards a 'health of heart' interpretation of the meaning. Indeed, the term 'bio' in the UK is more associated with biology and life sciences, and it is not used in the context of organic food. In IT, in general, the association with health was seen as appropriate, since organic is mainly associated with health concepts.

The other images and artwork were generally rejected in all of the countries. The 'heart/ Earth looking farm' associated with Local Food arguments was considered too complex and too full of stimuli to be easily understood: "...at a first sight, the yellow symbol is difficult to be connected to what I understood from reading the message..." [ITFG2.10M]. Most UK consumers did not recognize the grain silo, and some thought it was a sausage, or even a bomb! Those that did recognize it, found it inappropriate for poultry farms. The tractor too appeared to be little accepted, since some UK consumers associated it with 'pollution'. In AT, they simply thought the heart symbol here was too much; besides, the graphics of the heart with symbols, like the tractor, made participant ATFG1.5F think that the eggs were produced by a cooperation of farmers that also sold other produce, e.g. field crops.

Finally, the Fair Price 'sketched farmer with great heart' logo was found to be really hilarious and inappropriate in all of the countries. In IT, some of the consumers even associated it with a cook more than a farmer. In CH, the moustache was seen as neither very Swiss (somebody associated it with Russian farmers), nor very organic: "*therefore he is fat... and has a moustache. This is not the image I have of an organic farmer*" [CHFG2.11F]. The AT consumers reported that the farmer was "striking", but looked like a Mexican, south Italian or Bavarian, so he did not look Austrian in any way. Besides these, the farmer's "cosmopolitan look" provided associations with Fair Trade products. In the UK, the consumers associated the image with all of the above: either a Mexican, Spanish or French farmer, or with a butcher – sometimes different cultures are not that different in their prejudicial imaging!

In terms of the text, no headline was really appreciated by all of the consumers. Analysing in depth the reasons for their likes and dislikes can help provide an understanding of the kind of label consumers would expect on organic eggs with additional ethical claims.

For most of the participants, the Animal Welfare 1 'Heart's choice' was the most successful headline (or the least unsuccessful) in most of the countries. However, this slogan reminded some of the AT and IT participants of political or sports advertising, while others felt it to be a clear 'emotional' device by marketers. Those who disliked the 'feel' dimension in the advertising clearly rejected this on the ground of the need for more sound information based on facts and evidence. This was indeed the attitude in DE and CH, where only a minority of the consumers found the positive emotional drive to be appealing.

In the UK (and also in IT), most of the participants (and in particular the males) thought that the headline was implying that organic eggs are good for the health of the heart. This 'health' claim was felt as a dubious and probably false statement ("*Eggs are not good for the heart*" [UKFG2.7M]). This interpretation is a good example of the difficulty of doing 'etic' advertising. In the UK, the intended message was perceived only by a minority of the participants (mainly the females), who did see the 'feel' dimension of the message, and they connected it with a positive attitude towards the chickens and associated it with the chickens being looked after. The heart was therefore recognised as a symbol of love and respect towards the animals. In any case, this was the most preferred label in the UK when looking at the body text, since it was simple and conveyed what the consumer would like to know about organic eggs (welfare and GMO-free feed). However, for some AT consumers the 'heart's choice' sounded strange and inappropriate, since they did not want to choose their eggs with their heart, but "with the stomach". The 'feel' dimension was refused this time not on the basis of an intellectual request for more information, but on the ground of a common-sense preference for the sensory evaluation of food.

The other Animal Welfare headline ('Produced with the heart') was criticised much more. Again, the emotional appeal was seen as overblown for an egg label, and also the wording itself was problematic. Although checked by three native English speakers, the English version was probably mistaken. Some UK consumer suggested that 'Produced from the heart' would more appropriate,

while probably 'Produced by the heart' was the intention of the copy writer. Carrying out international research can be associated with some hermeneutical risks, and the 'translation' issues are a clear example of these risks! In some of the German-speaking countries – namely CH and DE – the language and grammar were commented on as "bad" or "wrong". The impact of these issues on the overall attitudes is certainly relevant: *"The style of language, [...], that is so, so, so unprofessional. Or just not good. The style of German"* [CHFG2.13F].

Of the Regional/ Local Food Production headlines, the only one that had some appeal was 'From the heart of our region' (Local Food 1). The main problem here was that the term 'region' was considered too broad and vague in all of the countries, and was even called a "continental" word in the UK: *"the heart of Lazio would be better...it is more trustworthy if I read it...if not I don't believe it is close to me"* [ITFG2.3M].

'Local' was the much preferred and suggested term, although some participants felt that an exact geographic origin would be much preferred: *"Why can't it just say produced locally instead of putting from the heart of our region?"* [UKFG3.5F]. In **all** of the countries, the consumers felt that 'local' and 'close' were synonymous with 'less polluting', and also with 'safer' and were more credible. This was clearly the case in CH, where the consumers thought that the Biosuisse 'bud' logo embeds within itself almost all of the desirable characteristics of organic eggs. However, in IT, where the participants were recruited in the capital city Rome, some participants had the feeling that 'local' eggs were not particularly safe: *"If eggs are produced close to where I live and are brought to my table, it means they can be polluted and are not so safe and healthy because we live in Rome"* [ITFG1.5F].

The Local Food 2 headline ('From the heart of our tradition') was generally disliked everywhere. What kind of link might exist between 'tradition' and egg production was difficult for the participants to understand. In some of the countries, and for some of the participants, linking organic with 'tradition' had negative connotations. Tradition was seen here as a synonym of conventional/ traditional farming (*"Tradition, this is strange... traditional agriculture is the agriculture with chemicals"* [CHFG1.3M]), or of conservative political views. Only in the UK, and in the FG where it was the first label to be shown, did it prompt some positive attitudes: the word tradition stimulated thoughts of the original way of rural farming, the feeling that this type of farming had been around for a while, and that it was the type of farming that was carried out years ago. One participant said the label made them feel that the farmers had *"a passion for what they were doing"* [UKFG2.1M] and another that the farmers *"cared about the local environment and traditions"* [UKFG2.8F]. Overall, the Local Food 2 headline was rejected, with negative associations to old-fashioned farming and farming propaganda (this was true also in the UK).

The Fair Price 1 headline 'I support those who have our world at heart' had a mixed reception in most of the countries. In AT, the reference to the 'world' was seen as positive, in contrast to nationalism, and given the global conditions, it affects everyone. However, it was also seen as far too complicated. One AT participant even stated that generally there is no place for social issues in advertising. In DE and the UK, people felt disappointed by the directness of the emotional appeal, and the guilt-making connotation of the message: *"if you want to be a good man, then you have to buy these eggs. If you don't buy them, then you don't want anything good for this world."* [DEFG1.4M]. The term 'support' was also disliked in most of the countries: *"they sell their eggs anyway why they should be rewarded further?"*[UKFG1.1M]; *"support makes me think of tithing the farmers"* [ITFG1.2M]; *"I like to pay a fair price to farmers. I really want. But I do not like to support them"* [CHFG3.26F].

The first, Fair Price 1, headline was certainly preferred to the Fair Price 2 of 'The wellbeing of our farmers is close to our heart'. In many of the countries, the consumers were puzzled about the message centred on farmers instead of consumers or animals. Some were surprised, some were really disappointed: *"... of our farmers... not of our customers? Oh no! [...] I do not buy an egg to make the farmer more happy!"* [ITFG2.9F]; *"buying food (eggs) is not like being a supporter of WWF ...farmers are not like animals we must save from extinction!"* [ITFG2.8F]; *"I have to say that on this one that I'm not too worried about the well-being of the farmer. I'm more concerned about the chick that laid the egg."* [UKFG3.4M]; *"I may be thinking about it, but I don't want to see it on the egg box"* [UKFG1.6F]; *"when I buy eggs, I don't care about the farmer. I care about the hens and how they are looked after. The farmer is not important"* [ATFG2.6M].

The various body texts also resulted in a lot of complaints and disappointment, although a lot of the information raised during the FG discussions is very useful and helpful. It allows us to have a better understanding of what ethical claims are really acceptable to the consumers. As a general issue, the consumers were puzzled when the headline and copy texts used personal pronouns like 'I' and 'we'. In most cases – with the exclusion of the Local Food 1 concept – doubts were expressed if the reference was to the consumer or to the farmer, or to somebody else.

With respect to the Animal Welfare argument, the elements of the text which were not controversial in all of the countries were:

- 1) the GMO-free feed reference;
- 2) the freedom to live and roam outdoors.

The idea of 'looking after [the hens] with love and care' sounded excessive to a large number of the consumers, especially in DE and CH, although it was also found appealing by many others. The 'love and respect' claim did not receive unanimous approval by the consumers. However, consensus is not the only thing that matters when analysing qualitative research results. It is of note that a minority of the consumers – in all of the countries except DE and CH - expressed real appreciation of this different approach to animal welfare, where 'rights' are expressed in emotional requirements too. In DE, 'love' and 'care' were seen as appropriate for a cow, but not for a hen. In CH, doubts were cast that a farmer could love his/her hens.

In most of the countries, the claim '100% organic healthy life' was also perceived as overblown and fake, as did the '100% bio' yellow circle that was replicated on all of the labels. Some consumers felt that this was redundant, and even caused confusion about the organic status ("*What is the reason for 100% organic? Do you get organic things that aren't 100%?*"[UKFG3.5F]), and some felt that it was exaggerated. In IT, the 100% bio circle and the 100% bio healthy life were actually considered to be the most important claims by a the vast majority of the consumers, because the most important issue was that the eggs were organic. The different perceptions of the certification logos is probably the reason behind these differences. In CH, the BioSuisse 'bud' is very strongly felt as a guarantee of organic origin; in IT, consumers feel much more unsure about the certification logos and consider the word 'organic' as the best evidence for organic quality.

With respect to the Regional/ Local argument, it was quite clear that the term region is not specific enough in most of the countries and that it should be replaced by 'local'. At the same time, there is a clear continuum from national, regional and local produce as they are perceived by the consumers. Usually, for the vast majority of the consumers, the closer the better. The term tradition should be avoided in the context of organicPlus labelling, since it conveyed mixed feelings in most countries, and generally had a negative connotation. Some participants in the FGs supported explicitly mentioning or visualising the actual producer (either on the labels or in enclosed leaflets). However, others thought that having the name or the picture of a poultry farmer on supermarket egg packages lacked credibility.

The Fair Price argument was certainly the most disliked, at least in the way it was presented to the consumers in the headlines and text. In the Fair Price 1 concept, the term 'Mother Earth' was seen as conveying spiritual or religious meanings that were felt inappropriate in egg packaging by many of the consumers in many of the countries. The word 'support' was disliked a lot. Mentioning the 'hard' work of the farmer was also felt to be inappropriate. In general, tackling the issues of farmers' survival and income support directly is certainly not an appropriate marketing and labelling strategy.

Although the idea of paying a 'fair' price was not refused everywhere, in DE, IT and the UK, this option was not really liked by most of the consumers, who believed that the welfare of the hens and consumer well-being are more important than the well-being or survival of the farmers.

The amount of information given on the labels was discussed at some length in all of the FGs, and it appeared to have an influence on the liking and credibility of the label. Particularly in DE and CH, the participants complained about the lack of relevant information, judging the labels and their related claims as 'empty and meaningless'. In IT, AT and the UK, the consumers clearly stated that they were

interested in the type of information that would make them more knowledgeable about the quality of the eggs and the benefits for their health. Short and clear sentences with this kind of information should be widely appreciated. The lack of them appeared to reduce the label liking.

In general, the shorter the headline and body text, the better. In some of the countries, the 'think' dimension was preferred to the 'feel' one, although this was not true for all of the consumers. Emotionally appealing concepts, however, should not appear as overblown or intrusive. It was quite clear that in most of the countries, except for IT and partially for AT, the use of the 'heart' symbolism – either in words or images – was not a successful labelling strategy for conveying ethical values.

Due to the nature of the study, the labels targeted the three chosen arguments (Animal Welfare, Regional/ Local Food Production, Fair Price) separately. A general perception in all of the countries was that the arguments should have been combined. At least, Animal Welfare and Local Production were both seen as important by the consumers. The Fair Price issue was felt to be a lot more questionable.

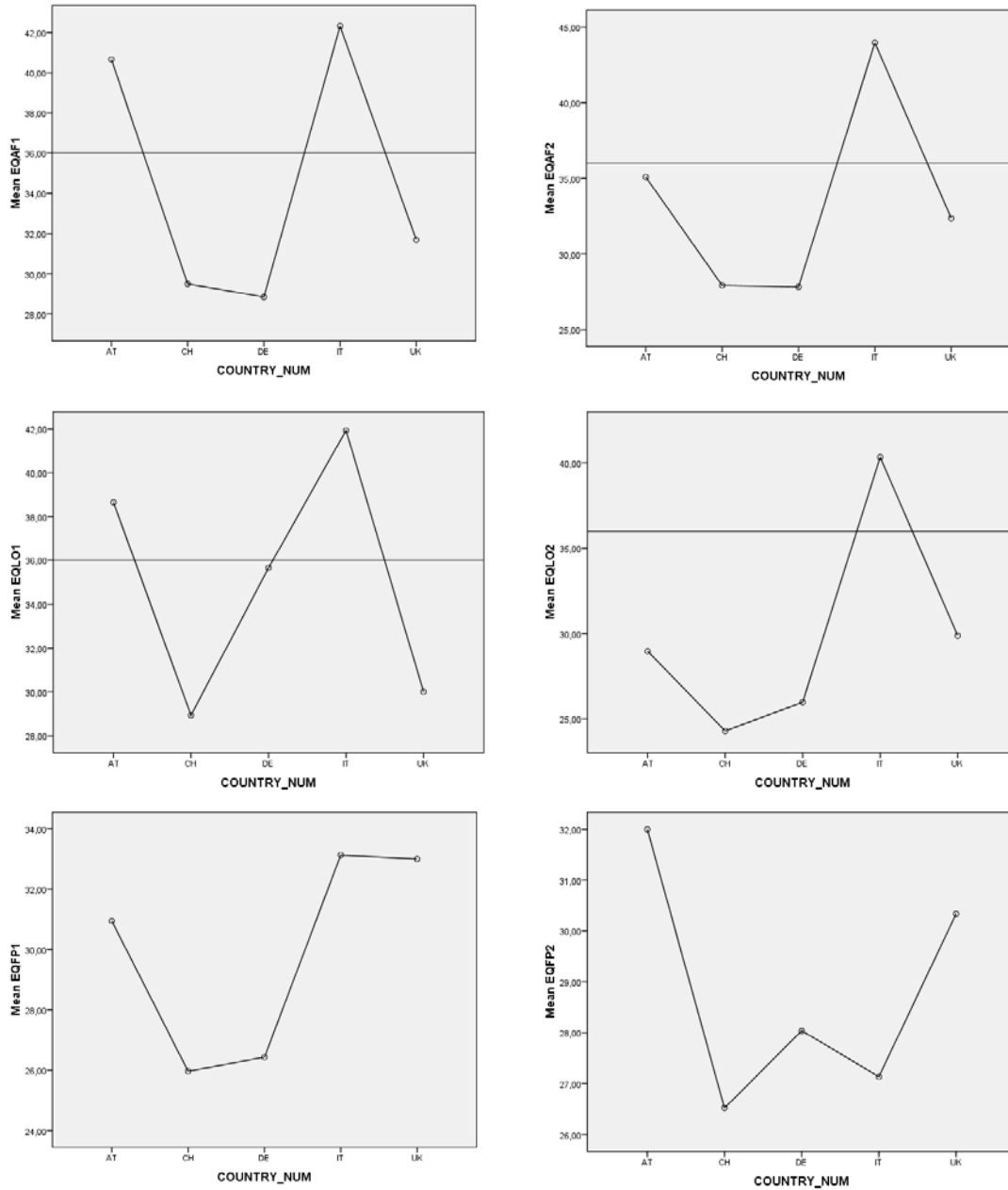
The bad perception of the labels is confirmed by the emotional quotient measurements of the organicPlus arguments. We now refer to the results of the individual paper-and-pencil questionnaires that the participants filled in just *after* the FG discussions. The answers to these questionnaires, therefore, combine the individual attitude measurements with the group influence that the participants were exposed to during the FG discussions.

Despite the generalised low level of liking for the various organicPlus arguments and for almost all of the labels (Figure 9), there emerged great variability across the countries and the different labels. The mean scores of the EQ scale (label liking) are quite different when the different arguments are evaluated in the various countries.

As can be seen from Figure 9, it is clear that only IT, and sometimes AT, had scores that show – on average – that the members of the consumer juries like at least some of the concepts. The EQ scores were above 36 for Animal Welfare (EQAF1: IT and AT; EQAF2: IT) and Regional/ Local Food Production (EQLO1: IT and AT; EQLO2: IT). Although Fair Price label arguments were generally disliked in all of the countries (scores well below 36), they had comparably better scores in AT, IT and the UK, although with a different preference towards the various labels across the different countries. Fair Price 1 (EQFP1) scored better with IT, followed by the UK, while Fair Price 2 (EQFP2) was less disliked in AT. The CH and DE juries were always quite negative in their judgements. Only the DE participants gave scores around the mean values (neither like nor dislike) for the Local Food 1 label (EQLO1).

Figure 9, however, gives only a first hint about the attitudes of the consumer juries. By analysing label liking (EQ) scores by country, it is of note that only in AT and IT were the Animal Welfare 1 concept scores significantly higher – in statistical terms – than the boundary value of 36 ($t_{AT} = 2.801$, $t_{IT} = 5.877$), showing a positive attitude towards Animal Welfare 1 in these countries. In CH, DE and the UK, the t-test shows that Animal Welfare 1 scored significantly lower than the boundary value, meaning that the concept was disliked. Despite this, this concept was, on average, the most preferred (either the most liked or the least disliked) in all of the countries, compared to all of the other concepts. This suggests that among the arguments that were investigated in this study, Animal Welfare would be the most 'universal' organicPlus argument in the countries studied.

Figure 9. Emotional quotient (label liking): mean values per country/label concepts



By analysing the differences in EQ scores within the same argument, further elements emerge. Although the order of labels changed from one group to another, the version defined as number 1 appeared to be always favoured, whatever the organicPlus argument. In other words, Animal Welfare 1 was more liked (less disliked) than Animal Welfare 2, Local Food 1 than Local Food 2, and Fair Price 1 than Fair Price 2. Overall, this difference is significant only in the Local Food 1 vs Local Food 2 comparison ($t= 5.68$).

During the FG discussions, Local Food 1 (headline: 'From the heart of our region', with body text: "These organic eggs are produced close to where I live and are brought to my table with minimum transport and less pollution") was perceived as 'buying local', as a contraposition to buying 'global', and the argument was perceived as a way to reduce food miles and to have a closer 'fork-to-farm' relationship. The participants explained that they related their perception of the concept (and the embedded argument) to the possibility of having fresher eggs, and that they had a higher degree of trust and accountability for the product.

Analysing the data by country shows that the first set of concepts was generally preferred in terms of EQ, especially in AT and CH, with the exclusion of Fair Price, where no significant differences between the two concepts were found in any of the countries.

The FG discussions, especially in some countries, are difficult to interpret, given the overwhelming negative attitude shown by the participants over the label concepts. Therefore, in some cases it was difficult – for each country partner – to distinguish between arguments and concepts, and to break down the attitudes towards the concepts into attitudes towards the layout, the text and the imaging. Nevertheless, in general, the FG discussions confirmed a general preference for concept versions number 1 in all of the countries, with the exception of Animal Welfare 2 (preferred in IT) and Fair Price, the preferences of which were more blurred and generally not so clear-cut (the consumers generally disliked both concepts).

Some further insights can be derived from the following analysis of the Believability of the labels.

3.3 Label Believability

The analysis of the Believability scale (Beltramini, 1982) shows that in some of the countries, even if they disliked the labels, the consumer juries considered them quite believable in their arguments.

Figure 10 shows the mean scores of the Believability index across the consumer countries studied. From Figure 10, it is clear that the label/ concepts show various degrees of believability, with the exclusion of those related to the Fair Price argument, which were clearly considered not to be believable in any of the countries⁸.

In general, the results mirror the positive or negative assessments of the EQ scales. In AT and IT, the Believability scale follows the pattern of the EQ scale, showing that both the Animal Welfare and the Regional/ Local Food Production concepts are – on average – both believable and liked. Specifically, the Local Food 1 concept appeared to be believable (BEL_LO1) in three of the countries, as AT, IT and DE, while the CH juries, who generally disliked all of the concepts, since in the discussions the emotional influence of the label layout was overwhelming, regarded the Local Food 1 (LO1) label as neither believable nor unbelievable.

These data in Figure 10 are substantially confirmed by the statistical analysis. By analysing the label Believability scores by country, it is of note that only in AT and IT are the Animal Welfare 1 concept scores significantly higher – in statistical terms – than the boundary value of 30 ($t_{AT}=5.645$, $t_{IT}=7.944$), showing that the consumer juries – on average – found these concepts trustworthy. On the other hand, only the DE juries found these concepts significantly unbelievable ($t=-2.857$), while in CH and the UK, there was no clear-cut opinion as to the believability or the lack of believability. Although all of the labels were clearly disliked by the juries in these countries, in terms of credibility, the issue is more subtle, since organic consumers probably perceive the intrinsic trustworthiness of the animal welfare claims, no matter how ill posed they are in the labels. Also, although during the FG discussions in CH, DE and the UK, the participants commented on the labels as being ‘childish’ and ‘untrustworthy’, they did not appear as peremptory when the group pressure was over and the individual judgments needed to be made. For CH, the presence of the strong Bio Suisse ‘bud’ logo on the labels may have counterbalanced the poor believability associated with the creative format, and might be the main reason explaining the overall neutral judgements regarding believability.

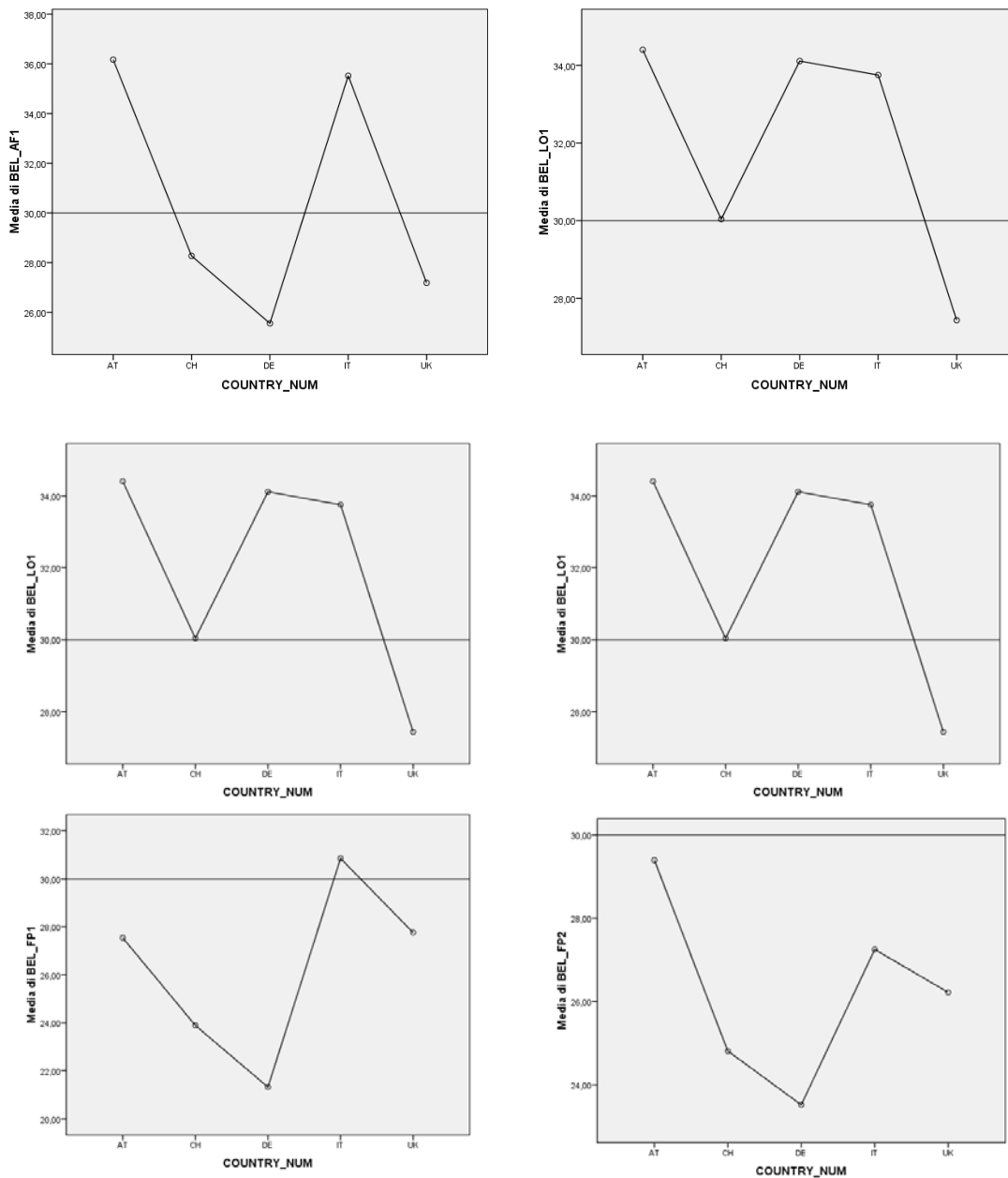
The judgement becomes more clear-cut with other concepts. Fair price 2 is scored as significantly unbelievable in all of the countries except AT, which exhibited a score that was not significantly different from the boundary point. In general, the DE juries tended to be the most severe in their judgments, since all of the concepts were rated as significantly unbelievable (the levels of significance

⁸ However, as it will be shown, the believability is not significant, with the exception of IT, for the Fair Price 1 concept.

were all below the 1% level), including, as already mentioned, for the Local Food 1 concept, which was significantly rated as believable.

Country differences are here more evident and clear-cut than for the EQ scales. The UK juries had no clear ideas about the believability or not of most of the concepts, with the sole exclusion of Fair Price 2, which was rejected as unbelievable with high significance ($t=-2.405$, $\alpha=0.02$). The IT juries rejected both the Fair Price concepts as significantly unbelievable, while they considered all of the other concepts as significantly believable. The CH juries considered both of the Fair Price concepts unbelievable, and all of the 'number 2' concepts of these arguments, while there was no clear-cut judgement on the other concepts. The At juries had no clear-cut believability judgments on most of the concepts, although they did rate Animal Welfare 1 and Local Food 1 as believable, with high statistical significance.

Figure 10. Believability: mean values per country/label (arguments)



By analysing the differences in the Believability scales within the same argument, a pattern similar to the EQ scales emerges. In general, the version named with number 1 always appears to be considered more believable whatever the organicPlus argument is, although the differences in

believability are significant only in the following cases: Animal Welfare 1 vs Animal Welfare 2 for AT; Local Food 1 vs Local Food 2 for AT, CH and DE; Fair Price 1 vs Fair Price 2 for IT.

The FG results may give some further insights into these preferences. In general, the Animal Welfare 2 concept (headline: 'Produced with the heart!'; body text: "The welfare of our hens is close to our heart! They have access to the outdoors where they are free to roam, and they are fed on natural, GMO-free feed. For them we have chosen a 100% ORGANIC healthy life!") was considered ambiguous, and even involuntarily comical in the headline and too naive in trying to capture the participants' affective support. As a result, the whole concept sounded "false", "exaggerated" and "unreliable". According to many of the consumers, the lack of credibility was also enhanced by the boasting and pretentious wording: "100% ORGANIC healthy life".

As already mentioned, the German-speaking participants (AT, CH and DE) also perceived the Local Food argument in the version of 'From the heart of our region' (Local 1) as significantly more believable than in the version of 'The heart of tradition!'. The German results were particularly noticeable, since the participants were always quite negative during the FG discussions, complaining about the lack of information found for all of the label arguments, with the exception of Local Food 1, the body copy of which was preferred over all of the other body texts, because of the valuable information.

In the other countries, the success of this concept was related to the connection of the Local 1 concept with closer farmer–consumer partnerships, as expressed by a shorter 'farm-to-fork' path that would lead to reduced food miles. This is how the consumers interpreted the part of the body text referring to "eggs produced close to where consumers live and brought to their table with minimum transport and less pollution". Indeed, the same sentence was particularly emphasised in other countries, like IT and the UK, even though the believability scores were not significantly different from the competing concept of Local Food 2.

3.4 Effectiveness/Purchase intentions

The final measure used to analyse the consumer attitudes towards the advertising labels was a simple purchase intention question. As was expected given the low attitudinal responses given by the EQs, in general, the results do not show high purchase intentions. The scores were centred around the neutral class 3 ("I don't know if I will increase my purchases"), as is often the case when a 5-point Likert scale is used. But in DE, the mode was always 5 ("I will definitely not increase my purchases") for all of the concepts, while in AT and CH, the mode swung between 5 and 4 ("I will probably not increase my purchases"). This last value was also the mode in the UK for all of the concepts. In IT, the mode ranged between 2 ("I will probably increase my purchases") and 3.

Again, cross-country cultural differences are manifested in these results, while the general pattern of the preference (or lower dislike) for the Animal Welfare 1 concept followed by Local 1 is confirmed, although the differences are much less strong in terms of stated Purchase Intention.

3.5 Label recall

Recall testing was performed 10 days after the FGs.

The overall response rate was 91%, with significant dropping out, especially in DE (see Table 4).

Table 4. Recall response rates

	<i>FG</i>	<i>Recall</i>	<i>Rate</i>
AT	37	37	100%
CH	28	28	100%
DE	28	18	64%
IT	30	26	87%
UK	33	33	100%
Total	156	142	91%

Two-thirds of the respondents remembered that the FGs discussed organic eggs, 31.4% recalled that they were about eggs, and the remainder remembered that organic food was discussed. Unaided recall statistics showed that almost half of the consumers – surprisingly – remembered the Regional/ Local argument (see Table 5). The heart and hen went together in the memories of the consumers, showing that although it was a peripheral cue in the advertising company intentions, the heart theme certainly ended up being well remembered. However, this does not necessarily mean that it was recalled with positive associations, at least from what emerged from previous results. Even if coupled with free-range, Animal Welfare was only recalled by less than one quarter of the consumers, while the Fair Price and farmers’ support argument did not stick in the respondents’ minds.

Table 5. Unaided recall

<i>Claim/theme</i>	<i>Percent recall</i>
Regional/ Local	45.8
Heart	37.3
Hen	34.9
Tradition	19.3
Environment Protection	19.3
Animal Welfare	13.9
Health	12.7
GM free	10.8
Farmers’ support	4.8
Free range	4.2

Table 6. Aided recall

<i>Claim</i>	<i>Percent recall</i>
6. local eggs	96.4
17. heart’s choice	92.5
1. GM-free feed	89.4
4. free range	86.9
3. animal welfare	86.3
13. animals live outdoor	83.8
10. minimum transport & less pollution	81.9
5. good working conditions for farmers**	78.1
19. respect for farmer values	72.5
11. fair reward to farmers	72.3
15. environmental protection	66.9
7. food miles	63.1
14. egg quality*	38.8
12. consumer’s health**	38.1
9. egg shelf-life*	22.6
2. egg size*	20.6
16. heart disease prevention**	20.0
8. egg colour**	13.1
18. love for own children**	7.5
20. slow food**	7.5

The aided recall results are given in Table 6. It should be noted that all of the ‘real’ central claims (Table 6, no stars) show greater aided recall than the peripheral ones (*), which are above the false ones (**). The only noticeable exception is ‘good working condition for farmers’ – a non-existent claim that was probably confused with ‘fair reward to farmers’ and ‘respect for farmer values’, which had similar recall rates – and ‘consumers’ health’, which even if it was non-existent, it was unconsciously associated with organic products in the minds of the consumers. Again, the Regional/ Local argument showed the highest recall rate (Table 6: in this case, almost a unanimous vote), together with the ‘heart’s choice’, which was generally thought of as the most effective headline in all of the countries, including those where it was not liked. The GM-free feed and the various animal welfare claims all had a recall rate between 84% and 90%, while the ‘environmental’ claim that was embedded in the Regional/ Local argument (‘minimum transport and less pollution’) was recalled by almost 82% of the respondents. The slightly lower recall rates of ‘environmental protection’ and ‘food miles’ show that not all of the consumers that recalled the ‘minimum transport’ issue clearly associated these themes to the labels.

Interestingly enough, among the false claims, there was 'heart disease prevention', which was recalled by one fifth of the respondents. Analysing this result at the country level revealed that the problem was only in the UK, where 84.8% of the respondents recalled this claim, compared to 0% to 10% in the other countries. The 'heart' imaging – as already discussed – certainly caused confusion in the majority of the UK respondents, as did the wording of the two Animal Welfare concepts.

In general, not many other statistically significant country differences were seen, although the UK consumers showed more fantasy than the others. In CH, the participants specifically recalled that egg size was a specific claim on the label (57% vs. an average of 12.3% in the other countries). Egg colour was recalled by one third of the UK consumers, while on average only 7.5% of the respondents from the other countries recalled this non-existent claim. In the UK, 60% percent of the participants were also sure that the labels contained claims about the egg shelf-life, while only 12% of the other respondents felt the same. UK (81.8%) and IT (53.8%) respondents also recalled a 'health' claim, which was not noted by the others (9.6%). The UK consumers also recalled a 'slow food' claim (24.2%), significantly differing from the average of 3%.

After their participation in the focus groups, 64.5% of the respondents had bought organic eggs, and 71.1% declared their intention to buy organic eggs in the week after the telephone interview. In general, the relative majority of the respondents (36%, modal value) felt that they were influenced very little by the labels seen during their organic egg purchase behaviour, and on average, the influence was just above a little. The IT and UK respondents felt significantly more influenced than the CH and DE consumers. Indeed, while the modal value in CH and DE was 'very little influenced' (71.4% and 66.7%, respectively), the modal value was 'very highly influenced' in IT (34.6%). In the UK, the mode was as 'highly influenced' (52.4%). In IT, the second most frequent value was the neutral one ('neither much influenced nor little influenced'), while in the UK it was the 'very little influenced' value (19.0%), with a much more dispersed pattern of opinions. The AT consumers were, on average, little influenced: the modal value, however, was 'very little influenced', as mentioned by 37.0% of respondents.

4 Discussion and concluding remarks

The well-established Foote, Cone and Belding grid (Vaughn, 1980; Peter et al., 1999) classifies products and services according to whether the purchase decision occurs under low or high involvement, and it defines cognitive (thinking) *versus* affective (feeling) information processing.

'Think' products are bought primarily for utilitarian, rational reasons, such as the functional consequences associated with the use of the product (Claeys et al, 1995; Peter et al, 1999). In contrast, the purchase of 'feel' products is driven by the need to satisfy emotional wants, such as psychosocial consequences and values, and by other 'transformational' motives (in the sense of Rossiter and Percy, 1991) that affect the consumers' sensory, visual or mental state.

The level of consumer involvement is generally considered low for food products (Costa et al., 2004), albeit previous studies have posited that organic food might entail a higher level of consumer involvement than conventional food (Zanoli and Naspetti, 2004). Means-end chain analyses have shown that organic products are connected with a high number of values (Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002; Makatouni, 2002), and can therefore be classified as 'feel' products (Claeys et al, 1995). Similarly, organic food can be classified as a 'credence' product using the Economic Information Theory approach (Nelson, 1970; Darby and Karni, 1973; Engel, 2006); once credible information about a credence characteristic becomes available, the consumers can also make inferences as to other quality dimensions, like believing that organic products taste better or are more healthy (Grunert and Andersen, 2000; Grunert, 2002; Napolitano et al., 2009).

In means-end theory language, product labels can be viewed as concrete attributes of the product. The consumers' processing of the information contained in labels can also be differentiated according to the think/ feel distinction. 'Think' labels are more apt to be processed logically and analytically, implying rational and sequential thinking, and hence 'left brain', cognitive processing. 'Feel' labels

indicate 'right brain', affective processing, implying emotion, image and holistic judgements (Claeys et al., 1995).

In general, the results of this study provide some evidence in favour of the hypothesis that the CH, DE and UK consumers prefer 'left brain' processing of the labels, either because of cultural bias (e.g. the values and emotions expressed and the imagery were inappropriate to their culture) or because of differing perceptions of the egg product across the various cultures (i.e. in CH, DE, and UK these are perceived as 'think' products, while in IT and AT they can be classified as 'feel' products).

Indeed, even in these last two countries (AT and IT), the overall impressions of some of the label headlines and text were that the advertising was excessive, pushy and somewhat overblown. However, the whole exercise resulted in quite high recall measures, although the influence was rather low in most countries except IT and, with a split sample, the UK.

The results support the use of a green label for organic egg packaging, which could be an even more intense shade of green. In contrast, the yellow and, especially, the pink elements (heart) are more controversial and were highly rejected in CH, DE and the UK. Egg images are generally accepted – with some diffidence only in DE – while many consumers claimed to feel more comfortable (also) seeing a photograph of real hens. National organic logos are very important, especially in CH, DE and AT, and of course it is expected that these are embedded at high levels as an organic quality assurance and guarantee.

Among the organicPlus arguments tested, Animal Welfare and Regional/ Local Food Production were by far and away the most popular among the respondents in all of the countries. Animal Welfare is well understood in terms of better conditions for the hens: free-range is standard for organic production, so where does the organicPlus value come from? Outdoor roaming was a well accepted concept by the consumers, so maybe pasturing – as is already claimed by some egg producers in AT and CH – is also of extra value. In quantitative terms, this can be measured as the space available per animal to roam, or in terms of flock intensity, although this last is probably less immediate for consumers.

The results shed light on how to communicate the Regional/ Local argument. First of all, local and regional are not the same. And the term 'regional' does not work well in the UK. Counties represent a more meaningful geographic division than regions (e.g. Berkshire, Devon, etc.). Local usually means very close to the consumer – with a village or town dimension – although in some cases it also extended to a county or province. Evaluating all of the results, the Regional/ Local dimension appears to be the most appealing organicPlus argument, and the concepts were widely accepted, both in terms of consumer qualitative and health attributes ('freshness', 'safety') and in terms of environmental concern ('food miles', 'minimum transport and pollution'). The consumers were happy to buy eggs produced "close to where they live", although they would like to know more clearly how close and where the eggs were from. In some cases, they would like to know the name and address of the farmer.

The 'safeguard of rural values and tradition' is felt to be much less convincing as an argument to buy local. Actually, in AT, CH and DE, these values and tradition can assume negative meanings in the minds of some of the consumers.

The Fair Price concepts were rejected in all of the countries by the vast majority of the respondents. Again, it is interesting to analyse the minority statements too, to fully understand what can indeed be learned. In general, the consumers did not like to think of having to 'support' organic farmers. They probably think that they already support the farmers as tax-payers, so why should they pay more?

'Survival' of farmers was also not an appropriate term to be used. The consumers had little idea that many small farms disappear every year, so they think of survival in terms of basic livelihood condition, and they cannot believe that any European farmers can be 'starving'. The consumers sometimes connected the issue to Fair Trade, and therefore they saw the relative condition of poor peasant farmers in third World countries as much more miserable and worth being 'supported'.

The consumers were certainly negatively influenced by the way that the concepts had been laid down in the text by the advertising company, and by the inappropriateness of the symbolism ('the man with moustache' issue). The attitudes towards the other labels were similar, although these were still given much higher levels of liking, believability and effectiveness, and more positive attitudes were expressed during the FG discussions. The Fair Price issues appeared to be too moralistic and pushy. Too much emphasis was placed on 'spiritual' terms (e.g. 'mother Earth'), and both concepts sounded too 'pathetic', as if they wanted to make the consumer feel guilty or sorry. The idea of making a 'fair deal' was disliked in the UK and in AT, while in the other countries the consumers were highly irritated by the wording of both of these concepts.

The rejection of the 'feel' label is shared by all of the countries here, although it appears that in general the consumers did not like to be directly asked to pay more to the farmer. They are ready to pay 'fair prices', if these prices are just ordinary prices, with no extra moral connotations to them, and not directly linked to farmer 'support'!

In conclusion, the results of our study suggest careful planning and pre-testing before the final quantitative step (choice experiment). This experiment will need to be done in an 'etic' context, while we should be aware of the country differences that exist. IT consumers are certainly quite different from all of the others, while the DE and CH consumers are more similar. Reducing to a minimum the amount of information that would need to be processed by the consumers will avoid getting very high rates of 'no choice' or status quo choices by the consumers, or, as mentioned in the literature, 'serial non-participation' in choice experiments (von Haefen et al., 2009). Providing this information on real labels will also be challenging, while a multiple choice format might be difficult to be accepted, since consumers easily feel bored and impatient when repeated choice tasks are requested, and these are also not easy to evaluate (Swait and Adamowicz, 2001).

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Appendix A. Label texts in the 3 different languages, per argument and claim

Arguments	German (DE/AT/CH)	English	Italian	Claims
Animal Welfare 1	Die Wahl des Herzens	The heart's choice	La scelta del cuore	
	Die Hennen werden mit Liebe und Respekt gehalten. Sie bekommen gentechnikfreies Futter und können im Freien herumlaufen.	The hens are looked after with love and care, fed organic feed free from GMOs and are free to live and roam outdoors!	Le galline sono allevate con amore e rispetto, libere da mangimi OGM, libere di crescere e di razzolare all'aperto!	love & respect freedom GMO-free
Animal Welfare 2	Mit dem Herz erzeugt!	Produced with the heart!	Prodotte con il cuore!	
	Das Wohlbefinden unserer Hennen liegt uns am Herzen. Sie können im Freien herumlaufen und bekommen natürliches, gentechnikfreies Futter. Für sie haben wir ein 100prozentiges Bio-Leben ausgesucht.	The welfare of our hens is close to our heart! They have access to the outdoors where they are free to roam, and they are fed on natural, GMO-free feed. For them we have chosen a 100% ORGANIC healthy life!	Ci sta a cuore il benessere delle nostre galline! Sono allevate libere di razzolare all'aperto ed alimentate naturalmente e senza OGM. Per loro abbiamo scelto una vita sana 100% BIO!	welfare & care freedom GMO-free
Local Food 1	Aus dem Herzen unserer Region	From the heart of our region	Dal cuore della nostra regione	
	Diese Bio-Eier stammen aus der Gegend, in der ich wohne. Sie kommen auf kurzen Transportwegen und mit geringer Umweltbelastung auf meinen Tisch.	These organic eggs are produced close to where I live and are brought to my table with minimum transport and less pollution.	Queste uova bio sono prodotte a due passi da casa mia e arrivano sulla mia tavola senza compiere lunghi e inquinanti tragitti.	Local and near Food miles Environment

Arguments	German (DE/AT/CH)	English	Italian	Claims
Local Food 2	Das Herz der Tradition!	The heart of tradition!	Il cuore della tradizione!	
	Unsere Region liegt uns am Herzen. Dieses regionale Produkt trägt zum Erhalt bäuerlicher Kultur und Traditionen bei.	Our region is close to our heart. This regional product safeguards our rural values and traditions.	Ci sta a cuore la nostra regione. Questo prodotto tutela i valori e le tradizioni rurali del nostro territorio.	Regional Rural values & traditions
Fair Price 1	Ich unterstütze die, denen unsere Welt am Herzen liegt!	I support those who have our world at heart!	Io sostengo chi ha a cuore il mio mondo!	
	Der Kauf dieser Eier honoriert die Arbeit der Bio-Bäuerinnen und Bio-Bauern, die unsere Mutter Erde pflegen und schützen.	Buying these eggs rewards the work of organic farmers who safeguard and preserve our mother Earth!	Comprando queste uova bio premio il lavoro degli agricoltori biologici che tutelano e custodiscono la nostra madre Terra!	Fair prices/reward for stewardship
Fair Price 2	Das Wohl unserer Bauern liegt uns am Herzen!	The wellbeing of our farmers is close to our heart!	Ci sta a cuore il benessere dei nostri agricoltori!	
	Ein faires Geschäft: Der Kauf dieser Eier honoriert die schwere Arbeit von Bio-Bäuerinnen und Bio-Bauern und ihren Familien und sichert ihr Überleben.	A fair deal: buying these eggs rewards the hard work of organic farmers and their families and secures their survival!	Un affare equo: l'acquisto di queste uova premia il duro lavoro degli allevatori biologici e delle loro famiglie e assicura la loro sopravvivenza!	Fair prices/reward for family farms

Appendix B. Label pictures in English, per argument

Animal welfare



Local/Regional production



Fair Price



Appendix C. Focus Group discussion guide

ATTENTION VERY IMPORTANT: Since we are testing the label and not the arguments, it is crucial to avoid bias related to the argument selection. The random order of the 6 different LABELS or the Random order of the 3 arguments (2 LABELS each) is introduced to avoid this problem.

Quest.	Phase	Directions	Hints and stand-by questions for further probing (<i>to be asked after main question</i>)
Quest.1	<p>Introduction of the FG (duration 10min) Introduce yourselves and explain your roles. Formulate the research description to avoid the bias (the same of the recruitment questionnaire). Mention the purpose of the camera, tape recorder as well as protection of privacy. State that issues concerning opinion towards ad decisions will be discussed. 1. Start by getting each person to introduce themselves: name and Ice - breaking question (Ex. where do you come from and favourite dish. When the introduction round has finished, sum it up as if you got a menu: "Now we have a big variety of different and very special food. Altogether it is a complete menu."</p>	<p>Very briefly Don't stress membership in CORE: remember the moderator is an independent person. To get to know each other, warming up; to create a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.</p>	<p>Let everybody talk, get in contact with participants by showing interest in what every single person says. Have a very brief conversation with everybody. Alternatively you could ask for their favourite dish or ask them to give themselves nicknames picturing their eating behaviour.</p>
Quest.2	<p>Recognition phase (max duration 45 min.) for each label (Random order of 6 ad♦: 5 minutes/ad) What comes to your mind in seeing this label? for all labels Which label would you sticks out/read? (Random order of 3 arguments: 2 labels each♦♦: 5 minutes/argument)</p>	<p>Explain participants they are going to receive a portfolio of labels for organic eggs. Each label was prepared for testing purposes only and are not currently on the shelf.</p>	<p>What do you think this label is trying to tell you? What is the main message?</p>

♦ **NB: Random order of 6 labels:** organize a slide show to let participants see and discuss a LABEL at a time. Change order from one fg discussion to another, don't care about argument

Quest.	Phase	Directions	Hints and stand-by questions for further probing (<i>to be asked after main question</i>)
Quest.3	Liking phase (duration 30 min) for all labels Which label do you prefer/like the most and why? (Random order of 3 arguments: 2 labels each**)	To make participants express any thoughts or comments they might have about the labels, especially anything they especially liked or disliked.	One set of probes <i>per argument</i> : Which graphical element (illustration) do you prefer and why? Which headline do you prefer and why? Which body copy/copy text do you prefer and why? Which claim do you think are most convincing and which less convincing?
Quest.4	Effectiveness phase (duration 30 min) Which ad interests you in buying the product the most? (Random order of 3 arguments: 2 AD each**)	Use slide show	Which ad copy you think is most credible (one per argument)? If you were to buy one of these egg packages, which you will chose and why (one per argument)

** **NB: Random order of 3 arguments (2 labels each):** organize a slide show to let participants see and discuss an ARGUMENT at a time (ANIMAL WELFARE, LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS regional production, and FAIR PRICE for farmers) and a pair of LABELS. Change argument order from one fg discussion to another.

** **NB: Random order of 3 arguments (2 labels each):** organize a slide show to let participants see and discuss an ARGUMENT at a time (ANIMAL WELFARE, LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS regional production, and FAIR PRICE for farmers) and a pair of LABELS. Change argument order from one fg discussion to another.

** **NB: Random order of 3 arguments (2 labels each):** organize a slide show (we will send you the slides) to let participants see and discuss an ARGUMENT at a time (ANIMAL WELFARE, LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS regional production, and FAIR PRICE for farmers) and a pair of labels. Change argument order from one fg discussion to another.

GLOSSARY

Labels: the advertising to be judged will consist of egg package labels

Graphical element (illustration): is the image on the right side of the label (chicken, farmer or heart/farm)

Headline: Sentence, phrase, word, or group of words set in large, bold type in a printed advertisement (in our case, the label). The purpose of a headline is to attract attention and usually to encourage the reading of the following copy. In print advertising, the headline is considered to be the most important element, because it invites the reader into the advertisement.

Body copy or copy text: Main copy block of an advertisement as distinguished from headlines, subheadings, logo, illustrations, and the like.

Claim: Statement that is used in the copy text that addresses some specific benefit be gained from use of that product-for example: free from OGM feed, free-range, locally produced, etc.

Appendix D. Ad Recall Questionnaire by Telephone (10 days after FG)

Ten days ago you participated to a focus group discussion regarding some product labels. Can you tell us which was the product? (*write down any reply, let respondent speak freely about his/her memory recall*)

NOTE FOR Interviewer: Don't read out possible answers nor suggest any reply. Tell the respondents there is no problem whether he/she remember or not.

1. eggs
2. organic food
3. organic eggs
4. other/ do not remember

Do you remember the themes/arguments of the label advertisement?

NOTE FOR Interviewer: Don't suggest possible answers nor suggest any reply. Tell the respondents there is no problem whether he/she remember or not. Write down respondents words/claims

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. Don't know/ do not remember

3. Do you remember some of this claims among those mentioned in the labels you saw and discussed ten days ago?

YES NO NOT SURE

1. GM free feed
2. egg size
3. animal welfare
4. free range
5. good working conditions for farmers
6. local eggs
7. food miles
8. eggs colour
9. egg shelf-life
10. minimum transport & less pollution
11. fair reward to farmers
12. consumer's health
13. animals live outdoor
14. egg quality
15. environmental protection
16. heart disease prevention
17. heart's choice
18. love for own children
19. respect for farmer values
20. slow food

Did you buy organic eggs during the last 10 days?

Yes	1
No	2

Are you going to buy organic eggs the next week?

Yes	1	If yes go to Q 6
No	2	If no → end interview

On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you think that your buying behaviour towards organic eggs has been influenced by the labels you have seen/ discussed? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means very little influenced and 5 very much influenced

[Note for the interviewer: do not suggest any reply according to your opinion, just read the question and explanation for the scale range]. Interviewer please read the table and set a X according to the respondents answer!

Very much influenced	5
Much influenced	4
Neither much influenced nor little influenced	3
Little influenced	2
Very little influenced	1

Thank you for your cooperation and for agreeing to participate in the study.

Farmer Consumer Partnerships

Abstract

Globalisation and growing anonymity of trade with organic products causes farmers in Europe to see themselves forced to lower their production standards in order to stand up to world-wide competition. Furthermore, consumers criticise food products, which were produced under unsatisfactory social and environmental conditions. Thus, this project investigates marketing and communication strategies by which organic farmers try to include higher ethical values in their production than the statutory ones. The aim is to know, which communication arguments for ethical aspects have proved to be the most promising from the consumers' point of view in different countries.

In the first part of this project, promising communication strategies and arguments of farmers' organisations will be identified. Selected arguments will be tested in different regions by a so-called Information Display Matrix (IDM). With this tool, the best ranked alternative product attributes and sales arguments will be detected. Advertising companies will then develop product labels and leaflets with information using the best-ranked arguments per country. Afterwards, different proposals for labels and leaflets will be tested in a two step approach with consumers by using Focus Group Discussions and a sales experiment in a so-called Consumer Choice Test. The experiment will be used to analyse consumers' buying behaviour and willingness to pay by presenting real products in a close to realistic laboratory setting.

The results will provide a valuable tool for the strategic positioning of organic companies and farmers' initiatives to differentiate their products from the mass market of organic products and improve their products' image and the consumers' willingness to pay. The results will also be interesting for policy makers to gain a better understanding of the country-specific attitudes of ethical consumers.

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