

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**EUROPEAN IMPORTER BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
IMPORTING FRESH APPLES FROM CHILE**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Applied Science in Agribusiness**

**Massey University**

**Palmerston North, New Zealand**

**MIGUEL A. RACZYNSKI**

**1997**

## Abstract

The objective of this research was to understand the attitudes European importers hold towards importing fresh apples from Chile. The purpose is to assist Chilean exporters to formulate adequate marketing strategies aimed at importers, in order to maintain and develop further competitiveness. The research examines the determinants of overall attitude towards the behaviour of importing apples from Chile. The analysis shows which beliefs and/or evaluative attitudes need to be changed in order to improve importers' overall attitude.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) have suggested a theory of reasoned action that can be used to predict and understand behaviour. In this research the theory of reasoned action was applied to examine attitudes of European importers towards importing apples from Chile and to expose to Chilean exporters the key areas in which positive changes can improve importers attitudes leading to a more favourable behaviour, i.e. increasing the likelihood of importing apples from Chile. In contrast to other models of organisational buying behaviour, the theory of reasoned action presents a conceptual framework that is practical to use for empirical research.

The research findings suggest that attributes related to the product such as quality and condition of apples as well as the infrastructure and capabilities of Chilean exporters to achieve good quality and condition were the attributes that most contributed to a favourable attitude. Exceptions were the specific cases of Bitter Pit and yellowing in Granny Smith apples and the proportion of new varieties (bicoloured apples) Chilean suppliers have available.

In relation to attributes that were exporter oriented, in general these contributed less towards a positive attitude. However, it can be concluded that improvements in the service exporters give to their importers could improve importer attitudes substantially. The key areas were fulfilment of pre-established shipping programmes, flexibility to

adapt to market dynamics and/or customer needs and in general a long term business commitment to the importer.

The study also indicates further possibilities for research on this subject.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the New Zealand Overseas Development Agency (NZODA) for awarding me with a scholarship to come and pursue my postgraduate studies in New Zealand.

My acknowledgements go in first place to my supervisor Professor William Bailey who guided and encouraged me through all stages of this thesis; and to Professor Robert Townsley who also supervised this thesis and assisted me particularly with the data analysis.

My acknowledgements also go to many people who supported this thesis by giving their valuable opinions. Special thanks to Isabel Quiroz and Manuel Jose Alcaíno from Decofrut in Chile, who were always prepared to share their opinions and supply some relevant information. I would also like to thank all European importers of Chilean apples who participated in this survey, specially those who shared their opinions with me during the preliminary phone interviews.

I also wish to thank my wife Paulina for her patience and support, and my daughter Carmen who was born in Palmerston North during the early stages of designing this thesis.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>		<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>		<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>		<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>		<b>viii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Objectives of the Research	2
	1.2 Outline of the Thesis	2
<b>CHAPTER 2.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 The Expansion of the Chilean Fresh Fruit Export Industry	3
	2.2 Chilean Fresh Apple Exports	5
	2.3 The European Apple Market	7
	2.4 The Role of the Importer	13
	2.5 Motivation for this Research	15
<b>CHAPTER 3.</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>16</b>
	3.1 Scope of the Literature Review	16
	3.2 Organisational Buying Behaviour vs. Consumer Behaviour	17
	3.3 Previous Research on Importer Buying Behaviour	22
	3.3.1 Importer Selection Criteria	22
	3.3.2 Importers' Cognitive Assessment of their Suppliers	27
	3.4 Attitude Measurement	32

	3.4.1 Definition of Attitude	32
	3.4.2 The Ajzen-Fishbein Theory of Reasoned Action	34
<b>CHAPTER 4.</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>37</b>
	4.1 Data Measurement	37
	4.1.1 Identifying Salient Attributes	37
	4.1.2 Measurement	41
	4.2 Data Collection	45
	4.2.1 Sample	45
	4.2.2 Survey Procedures	45
	4.3 Data Analysis	48
	4.3.1 Cognitive Maps	48
	4.3.2 Statistical Analysis	50
<b>CHAPTER 5.</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>51</b>
	5.1 Respondent Profile	51
	5.2 Descriptive Results	57
	5.3 Cognitive Maps	64
	5.3.1 Importer Maps	64
	5.3.2 Attribute Maps	71
	5.4 Statistical Analysis	75
<b>CHAPTER 6.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>89</b>
	6.1 Introduction	89
	6.2 Comparisons with Previous Research	89
	6.3 Implications for Chilean Exporters	93
	6.4 Possible further Research	100
<b>CHAPTER 7.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>101</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>104</b>

<b>Appendix 1:</b>	Cover Letter
	Questionnaire
	Reminder Letter
	Reminder Fax
<b>Appendix 2:</b>	Cognitive Maps of all Importers
<b>Appendix 3:</b>	Cognitive Maps of all Attributes



## List of Figures

Figure 3.1:	Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) view of attitude	34
Figure 3.2:	Schematic diagram of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action	36
Figure 4.1-a:	Measurement of the belief associated to attribute "overall quality of apples"	43
Figure 4.1-b:	Measurement of the evaluative attitude associated to attribute "overall quality of apples"	43
Figure 4.2:	An independent measure of overall attitude towards importing apples from Chile	44
Figure 4.3:	Areas that can be identified on a cognitive map	49
Figure 5.1:	Cognitive map of importer C	65
Figure 5.2:	Cognitive map of importer R	66
Figure 5.3:	Cognitive map of importer E	66
Figure 5.4:	Cognitive map of importer N	67
Figure 5.5:	Cognitive map representing the average respondent	68
Figure 5.6:	Cognitive map representing the average respondent for product oriented attributes	69
Figure 5.7:	Cognitive map representing the average respondent for exporter oriented attributes	69
Figure 5.8:	Cognitive map showing areas analysed for frequency of attributes	71
Figure 5.9:	Regression line representing equation 5.1	78
Figure 5.10:	Regression line representing equation 5.2	78
Figure 5.11:	Scree test to identify number of principal components	84

## List of Tables

Table 2.1:	Total exports of Chilean fruit and fruit orchard area in Chile by specie (1995/96)	5
Table 2.2:	Chilean apple exports to the main export destinations: 1991 to 1996	6
Table 2.3:	Total apple exports of different Southern Hemisphere apple suppliers	6
Table 2.4:	Export destinations for apples of the main Southern Hemisphere suppliers (1994)	7
Table 2.5:	Market balance for fresh apples in the EU	8
Table 2.6:	Apple imports to the EU from different Southern Hemisphere countries (1988-1994)	11
Table 5.1:	Number of importers by country where they are located	53
Table 5.2:	Number of importers by volume of Chilean apples imported	54
Table 5.3:	Respondent's experience in dealing with Chilean apples: Years in the business and number of Chilean suppliers during 1996 season	55
Table 5.4:	Respondent's experience with other suppliers from the Southern Hemisphere: Other supplier countries and proportion of apples imported from Chile	56
Table 5.5:	Proportion of apples in relation to overall imports of fresh fruits from Chile	57
Table 5.6:	Respondent's categorised by overall value of their companies' sales	57
Table 5.7:	Overall attitude scores towards importing fruit	58
Table 5.8:	Overall attitude scores towards importing fruit: only respondents that have experience importing Chilean as well as New Zealand or South African apples (7 respondents)	59
Table 5.9:	Summary of belief scores by attribute	61
Table 5.10:	Summary of evaluative aspect scores by attribute	62

Table 5.11:	Summary of attitudes towards each attribute measured by average belief scores ( $b_i$ ) x evaluative aspect scores ( $e_i$ )	64
Table 5.12:	Frequencies of attributes with minor contribution towards overall attitudes for respondents A, B, E, M, P, Q, R and S	71
Table 5.13:	Correlation matrix for all twenty attributes	82/83
Table 5.14:	Eigenvectors for the first five principal components (orthogonal vectors)	85
Table 5.15:	Summary of regression analyses	89