

Fact Sheet – Marketing for Health

Increasing consumption of vegetables

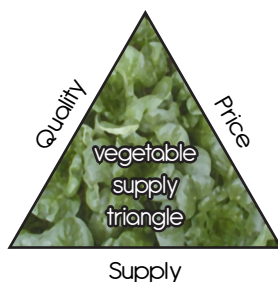
The main cause of waste, affecting all of the vegetables reviewed in this project is **oversupply**.

Evidence suggests that the largest cause of vegetables being either discarded in the field or culled postharvest is that there is no market for imperfect product. At certain times, market prices are so low that crops are simply abandoned, no matter how good their quality.

The main cause of vegetable waste is oversupply, resulting in low prices and strict market specifications

Grade standards and crop specification requirements are applied most stringently when supply is highest. Paradoxically this often coincides with the middle of production season and ideal weather conditions for a particular crop. Under these conditions, supply is usually plentiful, quality is good but prices are low.

For the supply chain to work effectively vegetable quality needs to be good, supply must meet demand and retail prices should be reasonable; farm gate and wholesale prices must be high enough for production and supply to be economically viable.

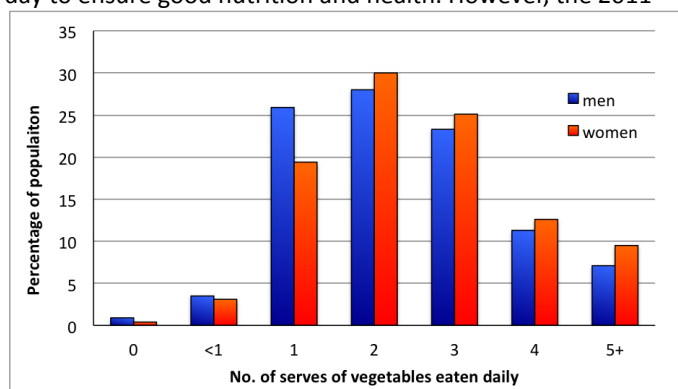


All too often, quality and supply are there but price is not. While this affects the grower most directly, indirectly all parts of the supply chain suffer because of lost sales.

The best solution for the industry seems clear; INCREASE DEMAND

Vegetables for better health

Australians do not eat enough vegetables. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends that adults eat a minimum of 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables a day to ensure good nutrition and health. However, the 2011-



2012 Australian health survey found that, although 48.3% of Australians ate the recommended number of serves of fruit, only 8.3% met the guidelines for vegetable consumption.

There is no doubt that diets rich in fruit and vegetables contribute greatly to improved human health. Increased consumption of vegetables, in particular, has been associated with reduced rates of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, stroke, and many other diseases and disorders too numerous to mention here. Despite this, more than 50% of the population does not even consume 3 servings of vegetables a day.

Increasing consumption of vegetables would not only have major benefits for vegetable growers, but would greatly improve the health of the population.

Strategies to increase demand

The Australian vegetable industry does not have a marketing levy, but that does not mean there is nothing the industry can do to increase sales of Australian vegetables.

There is an opportunity for the industry to leverage public health funds earmarked for promoting healthy lifestyles into also promoting vegetable consumption, especially if linked with current interest in food and cooking.

Previous campaigns have demonstrated that integrated approaches are better at changing behaviours than single messages. That is, information has to address knowledge, skills and social behaviours as well as environmental factors such as quality, availability and convenience. In the case of vegetables, this could mean:

- ★ Promoting the health benefits of eating vegetables.
- ★ Making it 'cool' to eat vegetables and, conversely, 'uncool' or 'socially irresponsible' not to eat vegetables at each meal.
- ★ Educating people about purchase and storage of vegetables.
- ★ Demonstrating easy and tasty ways to prepare vegetables.
- ★ Ensuring that vegetable options are available and affordable wherever people shop and eat.

For example, according to the FSANZ Food Standards Code, any vegetable with >4g dietary fibre per serving can be considered a "Good Source" of fibre. Half a cup of cooked leafy greens such as spinach and kale, green beans, peas, carrots or sweet corn can contain >4g fibre, making them potentially eligible to make this claim.



The role of Government

“an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”.

Benjamin Franklin

There is a clear role for government in campaigns that encourage public health and social responsibility. Successful past campaigns have included the Life Be In It campaigns of the 1980s, anti smoking, sun awareness and anti drink-driving campaigns. These have shown that campaigns can change negative behaviours and improve public health. For example, the Sun Smart campaign is estimated to have prevented more than 100,000 skin cancers between 1988 and 2003 in Victoria alone, representing a return of \$3.60 for every dollar invested.

The federal government committed to spending over \$850M in preventative health including anti smoking advertising campaigns several years ago. It spends large amounts on anti smoking advertising, e.g. \$61M in 2011, with a new campaign just announced and running until June 2013.

There is now clear and recognised evidence that increased consumption of vegetables improves health outcomes. Eating more vegetables could save billions of dollars per year in sick leave, hospital bills and lost work, quite apart from reducing the impacts of ill health on the quality of life.

At the same time, there is a strong push to reduce children’s exposure to advertising for junk food. This is thought by some commentators to represent the cheapest and most effective way to reduce obesity. A recent report by US Insurance company MetLife describes a potential health crisis amongst those over 40 in the near future, mainly due to lack of exercise, obesity and poor diet. In the USA, obesity is estimated to increase the cost of Medicare by \$1,723 per person annually. The report states that this could be mitigated by increases in education and health literacy, particularly in workplaces.

There is no marketing levy for vegetables and, even if there were, the industry could never match the advertising clout of large corporations such as Nestle, Heinz, McDonalds and PepsiCo. Nonetheless, it seems clear that increasing consumption of vegetables can improve health as well as reducing waste, and that this should remain a high priority for the vegetable industry.



Communicating with consumers

The National Go for 2&5 campaign improved understanding of the recommended serves of vegetables and increased awareness of the value of vegetables for health. The campaign had the most effect on people who consumed <2 serves of vegetables a day.



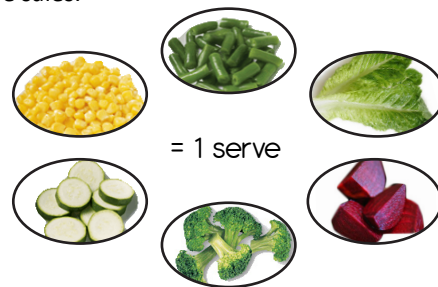
Go for 2&5
FRUIT VEG

A survey evaluating the campaign found that 28% of people attempted to increase their vegetable consumption as a result. While this may seem modest, if 28% of the Australian population ate 1 extra serve of vegetables each day, this would equate to 176 kt vegetables each year.

The challenge for the vegetable industry is to convince Government that increasing vegetable consumption through promotion is preventative health care which will reduce future demand on health services.

One issue is that only 15% of consumers understand what is meant by a serving of vegetables. In some cases they may think they are already eating enough vegetables, when in fact they are well below recommendations.

There is a strong relationship between understanding what is meant by a serving and eating more vegetables. Clearly explaining this to consumers could also help drive sales.



As consumers age, health consciousness increases. They are also less likely to follow a list and more likely to buy on impulse.

The health message has worked for both the mushroom industry and the avocado industries. It will also work for vegetables.

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