

Please note – These are extracts from one Student’s Response

The fresh produce for sale at the supermarket is unblemished, of a uniform size, shape and colour and clean. This has changed consumers’ food choices and eating patterns as they now have high expectations of what fruit and vegetables should look like and will not select vegetables and fruits with slight imperfections. “In today’s supermarkets there is no place, amid the shelves of lustrous fruits and vegetables, for such comically deformed specimens.” – (Strange Fruit, By Jonathan Duffy, BBC News Magazine).

A

The consumers’ attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and values are all altered due to the supermarket only having uniform “fresh” produce. They will now only buy fruit and vegetables that are considered to society “perfect” when in fact some of the freshest best tasting fruits and vegetables are not appealing to the eye. By society only buying eye appealing produce means large quantities of foods go to waste. Supermarkets say they are simply responding to customer demands “ugly” fruit and vegetables get left on the shelf...” (“Strange Fruit” article by Jonathan Duffy, BBC News Magazine 2012). When harvested, the “ugly” fruit and vegetables get sent to pig farms and given to the pigs. This produce is perfectly fine and tastes like any regular fruit or vegetables.

B

My teacher supplied the class with a carrot that was home grown. However it was grey in colour, and was extremely knobbly. When given this carrot to try we became aware that it tasted like a carrot you would get at a supermarket, in fact it was sweeter and tasted fresher. “Sniggering apart, the contest high-lights how our taste buds come to be conquered by our eyes” (“Strange Fruit” article by Jonathan Duffy, BBC News Magazine 2012)

C

All together our class surveyed 95 students from our college and asked them which fruit they would prefer out of two pictures. One picture of fruit that is sold at the supermarket (uniform size), the other picture of orchard grown fruit (not visually appealing) the students were unaware of where the fruits came from before their decision. In this survey the majority preferred option A (the uniformed, well-coloured and shaped fruit from the supermarket. The reason being option A “Was bigger and more colourful, looks juicy”, “it looks clean, fresh and ripe”. Whereas they said option B didn’t have such nice colours and shapes and because “they’d never tried B or seen B”, they being used to option A and unfamiliar with option B.

D

With perspectives getting changed on what the ideal fruits or vegetables look like it has a huge impact on the way people especially children eat. As the Ministry of Health 2003 report showed, only approximately three out of five children met the recommended number of 3+ servings of vegetables a day. This may be because they now have a high standard to what the “perfect” vegetables or fruit looks due to the supermarkets uniformed produce. By kids not getting the recommended intake it could highly affect their health. As these children are growing, it is the most crucial time for them to get all the nutrients they need.

E

Back before supermarkets were invented or around, consumers used to have to grow their own fruit and vegetables or get them from the markets or friends close by. Back then fruits and vegetables could only be eaten in their certain season, as importing/travelling from long distance was not possible as certain technology like refrigeration and freezers were not around. Nowadays many of our fruits and vegetables are imported from overseas, making them available all year around. This could be considered a good thing as people could get their favourite fruits or vegetables all year around adding to their 5+ a day servings. However

F

it changes knowledge on fruits and vegetables as people become unaware of when the actual seasons are. This could be a problem as the fruit and vegetables you buy from the supermarket when they not in season in NZ, makes the consumers become unaware of where their food actually comes from, as it is from different countries. Our supermarket shelves are stocked with foods that have travelled many miles. When looking at a list from where different fruits and vegetables come from, many of them come from different countries eg garlic from China, snap peas from Africa, tomatoes from Australia, grapes from Chile, and even mangos that travel 10,952kms from Mexico. – (Long distance food, Green Party – fact sheet)

At our school my class did a survey of 95 students to find out if they were aware of the seasons of different fruits and vegetables, the results were extremely interesting as it became apparent that the way this generation has been raised makes them unaware of the seasons as the produce sold at the supermarkets is all year around, being imported from different countries. In the survey, out of 95 students only three students knew the season of kiwi fruit, it being a winter fruit. G

However, all year round fruit and vegetables could be good for getting the amount of nutrients you need and getting the recommended amounts (5+ servings a day). But by the fruit being imported from other countries could mean they don't have all the nutrients it originally had as it would have travelled long distances and not be as fresh. Ms Balfour says "buying food out of season shows how disconnected Australians have become with the land", "Because of the disconnection we don't seem to know where our food actually comes from." – (Unseasonal desires, ABC News, Brigid Andersen). Consumers are also unaware of where the produce was grown, how it was grown and what herbicides/pesticides Have been used. The following facts suggest consumers should be more careful about where our produce comes from. "fresh tomatoes in the bulk bin in supermarkets are often Australian tomatoes that have been soaked in the highly toxic insecticide dimethoate to combat fruit fly, an insecticide that cannot be removed by washing and which has been found to disrupt reproductive function, cause chromosomal aberrations, damage the immune system, disrupt the endocrine system and affect the nervous system; New Zealand has banned the highly toxic insecticide endosulfan but some countries we import food from still use it on food crops, including Australia, USA, Canada, China, and India" Greens Party Fact Sheet to support Country of Origin Labelling 2011. Most supermarkets do label their produce but consumers need to ask if they cannot see clear labels. H