

MARKETING RESEARCH FOR ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTS MARKET IN THE CITY OF IASI

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Ecological agriculture is an agricultural system designed to provide consumer food fresh, tasty and authentic at the same time respecting the natural life cycle of systems. From the consumer point of view, ecological agriculture creates quality authentic products without using chemical synthesis. Worldwide, ecological agriculture is practiced in approximately 100 countries and area of land that is managed in ecological agriculture is constantly increasing. Also, the market for ecological agriculture is growing in all European countries, official and unofficial statistics estimating an increase to 10% annually. However the Romanian market for ecological products is still pioneering and synthetic information on demand referring to the domestic market is still insufficient. This article attempts to reduce the uncertainty on this market, making a marketing research to the market of ecological products in the city of Iasi in an attempt to assess their potential and its individualization.

Key words: ecological agriculture, ecological products, ecological products market, marketing research.

Organic farming is an agricultural system designed to provide consumer with food fresh, tasty and authentic at the same time respects the natural life cycle of systems. Organic farming is viable and makes the farming system to be viable and sustainable developed [2]. The consumer perception of organic products can be achieved through marketing research.

The marketing research is linking the consumer, customer and vendor to the public through information - information used to identify and define problems and opportunities of marketing to generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions, monitoring the performance and improving the understanding of marketing as a process [1]. The marketing research at the level of organic products in the city of Iasi tries to estimate its potential and its elements of individualization.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research program [4] is as follows:

The research domain is the market for organic products.

Place - a store specializing in organic products in the city of Iasi.

Study period - 11-15 May 2009.

The sampling principle: mix selection and the questions from the questionnaire [5] have been adapted to the field of organic product research.

Applying the questionnaire was made on the spot inside the store, making a direct selection because the chosen persons in the sample were visitors and buyers shop. Inside the sample, the person selection of those who responded was actually a random mechanical process, the step count.

After administration mode: type of inquiry is directed (oral), by face to face technics, so the communication between the operator and the person interviewed is directed. Completing the questionnaire was made effective either by the operator or the respondent in the presence of the operator, depending on the preference of the respondent.

Checking the degree of homogeneity of the population - in terms of issues researched, considered as a homogeneous population. Every persons participating has the same probability to enter in the sample, being considered representative.

The selection principle is the mixed sampling, because the process used was the sampling on the spot (the persons who visited the store).

For the sampling determination it was used the statistical formula $n = \frac{t^2 \sigma_0^2}{\Delta_x^2}$ [3],

where:

- Δ_x – limit error admissible - $\Delta_x = t \sigma_x$;
- t – Gauss – Laplace $\phi(t)$ function coefficient (the probability to guarantee the results $\phi(t) = 0.95$), from the function Gauss – Laplace table we determine $t = 2$;
- σ_x - the average error of the results;
- σ_0 - the average square deflection of the total population after studied characteristic.

Since the observation program shall have regard to several characteristics, the sample volume assessment will be based on the feature that requires the most precisely measured. If our research it was used the question "*What do you believe that means an organic product?*" attributive question type, with 6 possible response alternatives.

So $\sigma_0 = 0.1667$, and $\sigma_0^2 = 0.0277$.

For alternatives variable (in our research): $\Delta_x = 0.05$ (5 %) so

$$n = \frac{t^2 \sigma_0^2}{\Delta_x^2} = \frac{2^2 \cdot 0.1667^2}{0.05^2} \approx 43 \text{ persons.}$$

Duration of observation was one week, that is 5 working days and to ensure that each day was complete a number of questionnaires about 8.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Question 1 "*How did you find the existence of the organic products?*"

Table 1

The results of question 1

Question 1	Frequency	Percent
From mass-media	38	88.3
From a family member	1	2.3
From a friend	2	4.7
Don't know	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

The most important channel from which was known the existence of organic products was the media (TV, radio or print media) in a proportion of 88.4 %, the other informal channel (family members, friends, doctors, other people) having a lower percentage (below 5%).

Question 2 "*What do you believe that means an organic product?*"

Table 2

The results of question 2

Question 2	Frequency	Percent
A product that does not harm the environment	29	67.4
A product that contains no chemicals, "E", artificial additives	27	62.8
A product whose consumption not harmless human body	20	46.5
A natural product	19	44.2
A product that easily disintegrate in nature after utilization	16	37.2
A product labeled and certified	5	11.6
Don't know	0	0

We noticed the preference of respondents (67.4 %) that a product is an organic product that does not harm the environment.

Question 3 "*Have you ever purchased an organic product?*"

Table 3

The results of question 3

Question 3	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	81.4
No	8	18.6
Total	43	100,0

The vast majority of those interviewed (81.4 %) have bought organic products, which shows consumers' interest on such products.

Question 4 "*Where did you bought or buy mostly organic products?*"

Table 4

The results of question 4

Question 4	Frequency	Percent
Supermarket/hypermarket	18	41.9
Specialized store	14	32.5
On-line store	1	2.3
Other answer	7	16.3
Don't know	3	7.0
Total	43	100.0

The most frequent it has bought organic products in supermarket/hypermarket (41.9 %) and in specialized stores (32.5 %). The sporadically frequent has purchased organic products at online stores (2.3 %), but this aspect is in line with the lower share of electronic commerce in Romania (under 5 %).

Also, there was a high percentage (16.3 %) of buying organic product directly from the manufacturer or production of its own, because, on the one side, by the low purchasing power of the population in Romania, but also the low confidence in specialized channels distribution (supermarkets, hypermarkets, online stores etc.)

Question 5 *"Depending on the origin of the following products, in which product do you have greater confidence?"*

Table 5

The results of question 5

Question 5	Frequency	Percent
Organic products produced in Romania	34	79.1
Organic products imported	7	16.2
Don't know	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

The trust of most people interviewed is in the organic products produced in the country (79.1 %), much higher than the imported organic products (16.2 %). We believe that these answers mean the confidence in local products, and the growth potential in the Romanian market of organic products.

What importance has the following criteria in your decision to purchase a product?

Question 6 *Product price*

Table 6

The results of question 6

Question 6	Frequency	Percent
Very important	10	23.3
Important	26	60.5
Undecided	7	16.3
Little important	0	0.0
Unimportant	0	0.0
Total	43	100.0

The price is important in the purchase decision of a product as a percentage of 60.5 % and very important in a percentage of 23.3 %. Important is the fact that we have no answer to consider price least important or very little importance in the process of purchasing.

Question 7 *Brand*

Table 7

The results of question 7

Question 7	Frequency	Percent
Very important	9	20.9
Important	25	58.1
Undecided	6	14.0
Little important	2	4.7
Unimportant	1	2.3
Total	43	100.0

The brand is considered to be important by 58.1 % of respondents and very important by 20.9 %.

Question 8 *Product quality*

Table 8

The results of question 8

Question 8	Frequency	Percent
Very important	34	79.1
Important	9	20.9
Undecided	0	0.0
Little important	0	0.0
Unimportant	0	0.0
Total	43	100.0

The quality is considered to be important in a 100.0 % percent of respondents in the buying process.

Question 9 *The impact over environment*

Table 9

The results of question 9

Question 9	Frequency	Percent
Very important	14	32.6
Important	23	53.5
Undecided	4	9.3
Little important	2	4.7
Unimportant	0	0.0
Total	43	100.0

The environmental impact is considered important by 53.5 % of respondents and very important by 32.6 %.

Question 10 “*How do you think will grow the market for organic products in Romania?*”

Table 10

The results of question 10

Question 10	Frequency	Percent
Will decrease	2	4.7
Will stagnate	14	32.6
Will grow	27	62.8
Total	43	100.0

In a percentage of 62.8 % the subjects interviewed considered that the organic products market in Romania will grow in the future, which reflect the confidence and the growth potential of the organic products market in Romania.

CONCLUSIONS

The channel through which consumers have learned of the existence of organic products is the media (88.3 %) and 81.4 % percent of those polled have bought organic products.

Most often it buys organic products at the supermarket / hypermarket (41.9 %) and in specialized stores (32.5 %), the price, brand and product quality matters the most in the purchasing process.

The respondents considered in a percentage of 62.8 % that the organic products market in Romania will increase, so there is a high confidence in Romanian organic products.

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