

The Current State of the Israeli Avocado Industry

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The European market for avocados was created during the past 30 years by Agrexco, an Israeli export organization owned jointly by the government and the farmers. Agrexco is the exclusive exporter of Israeli avocados which are sold under the Carmel label.

Through the efforts of Agrexco, the avocado has grown from a totally unknown product in Europe to a well-recognized fruit.

France is the largest European consumer of avocados in both total and per-capita consumption. More than 85% of the French adult population recognize an avocado and 77% buy the fruit. The average corresponding figure for other European countries are 45% and 35%, respectively.

Agrexco has conducted a great deal of market research in Europe over the years in order to uncover buying patterns and motives and to find the best ways to increase consumption.

Some of the main conclusions are the following:

1. Impulse buying is much more common than are planned purchases. Therefore, promotional activities should be concentrated at the point of purchase.
2. Most retailers prefer to stock only hard avocados in order to minimize spoilage. However, consumers have said that they would buy more of the product if ripe avocados were stocked in the stores along with hard avocados.
3. The more ways in which people use avocados, the more avocados they tend to buy. Therefore, consumer education in the use of avocados (by distribution of recipes, in-store demonstrations, and other methods) can increase the number of heavy buyers.
4. While the overall patterns of consumption in various European markets are similar, there are still significant differences which call for promotional activity to be adjusted to each country.

Table 1. Reasons for consumers not buying avocados more frequently.

Reason	Percent citing the reason				
	England	Italy	Denmark	Germany	France
	<i>% of total response</i>				
Expensive relative to other fruits and vegetables	53.0	61.0	34.0	62.0	47.0
Too many calories (fattening)	35.0	38.0	33.0	46.7	57.4
Suitable only for special meals	16.0	63.0	23.0	48.6	19.0
Not always available to purchase	16.0	31.0	38.0	36.3	5.1
Not always ready to eat	58.0	73.0	56.0	70.7	70.2
Not for everyday meals	63.0	80.0	51.0	64.7	33.5
Other fruits and vegetables are more interesting	32.0	86.0	50.0	63.0	54.0
Children don't like it	39.0	32.0	33.0	46.6	36.4
Suitable for only a few types of dishes	31.0	49.0	49.0	27.3	44.7
Don't like the taste	7.0	34.0	12.0	33.4	20.5
Boring	7.0	59.0	8.0	21.0	7.7
Nothing special in it	13.0	42.0	21.0	28.7	—

Table 2. Planned vs. impulse buying in France by purchasing plan.

Frequency of purchase	Plan before buying	Decide in the store	Depends (both patterns)	No reply	Total response
	<i>% of total response</i>				
Regularly	26.1	46.2	27.2	0.5	818
Occasionally	17.4	52.7	28.7	1.2	1543
Total	20.4	50.5	28.2	1.0	2361

Table 3. Planned vs. impulse buying in France by frequency of purchase.

Frequency of purchase	Plan before buying	Decide in the store	Depends (both patterns)	No reply	Total response
<i>% of total response</i>					
Several times a week	43.8	30.9	21.6	3.7	52
Once a week	36.7	39.5	23.0	0.8	251
2-3 times per month	17.8	55.6	26.0	0.6	617
Once a month	17.5	52.5	29.6	0.4	502
1-2 times per trimester	15.0	55.7	28.3	1.0	562
1-2 times per year	23.9	43.0	32.3	0.8	329
Less frequently	13.0	36.1	50.9	-	43
Total	20.3	50.5	28.2	1.0	2361

Table 4. Consumption patterns of avocados in France: immediate vs. delayed use.

Frequency of purchase	Immediate use	Use later in the week	Later use	No reply	Total
<i>% of total response</i>					
Regularly	51.9	46.3	1.2	0.7	818
Occasionally	62.5	35.3	1.2	1.1	1543
Total	58.8	39.1	1.2	0.9	2361

Table 5. Consumption patterns of avocados in France: immediate vs. delayed use by meals.

Number of uses and meals	Immediate use	Use later in the week	Later use	No reply	Total
		<i>% of total response</i>			
1	61.8	35.9	0.8	1.6	424
2	62.7	35.8	1.1	0.4	581
3	57.1	41.4	1.4	0.1	962
4	59.3	38.5	1.3	1.0	210
5	51.9	47.2	0.9	-	73
6	50.5	47.6	0.4	1.4	75
7	48.8	47.2	4.0	-	27
Total	58.8	39.1	1.2	0.9	2352

Table 6. Avocado uses and meals by French consumers.

Meal	"Natural" cut into halves	Half-filled	In a salad	Sliced	In a sauce	Other	Total	% total
<i>% of total response</i>								
Lunch	880	595	161	15	186	40	1877	79.6
Dinner	207	114	34	8	33	17	413	17.5
Between meals	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.2	
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	63	2.7	
Total	1087	709	195	23	219	57	2359	
% Total Response	47.5	31.0	8.5	1.0	9.5	2.5	100	

Table 7. Avocado usage in France according to buying pattern.

Frequency of purchase	Use for special meals	Use for family meals	Both special and family meals	Total
<i>% of total response</i>				
Regularly	4.8	67.8	26.9	818
Occasionally	25.3	55.7	17.5	1543
Total	18.2	59.9	20.8	2361

Table 8. Avocado usage in France according to frequency of buying.

Frequency of purchase	Use for special meals	Use for family meals	Both special and family meals	Total
<i>% of total response</i>				
Once a week	-	57.9	37.2	52
1-2 times per week	3.3	71.7	24.4	180
2-3 times per month	5.5	67.1	26.9	617
Once a month	12.3	63.6	23.1	502
1-2 times per trimester	24.5	56.7	17.8	562
1-2 times per year	49.8	40.7	7.6	329
Less frequently	52.3	40.1	7.5	43
Total	18.2	59.9	20.8	2285

Table 9. Frequency of avocado consumption in France according to the number of dishes/meals.

Frequency of consumption	Average number of different dishes/meals (%)
Several times a week	3.56
Once a week	2.94
2-3 times per month	2.98
Once a month	2.72
1-2 times per trimester	2.51
1-2 times per year	2.46
Less frequently	1.93

Table 10. Avocado buying patterns by country.

Frequency of purchase	England 1988	Italy 1987	Denmark 1987	Sweden 1985	Germany 1986/87	France 1986/87	France 1980/81
	<i>% of total response</i>						
Regularly	4.0	2.0	9.6	5.5	3.2	27.0	18.0
Occasionally	22.0	19.0	28.1	37.7	18.7	50.0	40.0
Bought and stopped	8.0	14.0	6.8	11.3	8.7	7.0	12.0
Never bought	65.0	65.0	54.6	45.5	69.0	16.0	30.0
Total current buyers	26.0	21.0	37.7	43.2	21.9	77.0	58.0

Table 11. Consumer preferences in selected countries for ripe and unripe avocados.

Ripeness	England 1988	Italy 1987	Denmark 1987	Germany 1986/87	France 1986/87
	<i>% of total response</i>				
Ripe	42.0	61.0	75.0	44.3	26.7
Unripe	32.0	11.0	11.0	19.7	11.7
Both ripe and unripe	25.0	19.0	10.0	29.7	55.7
Not important	-	3.0	1.0	4.4	-
Don't know	1.0	6.0	4.0	2.0	5.2