

Organic Demand: A Profile of Consumers in the Fresh Produce Market

Demand for organic produce in the United States has increased steadily since the early 1990s, furthered by the implementation of national organic standards by the USDA in October of 2002. The industry once considered a niche product is now more available and affordable for consumers in mainstream grocery stores. Statistics vary according to Nielsen Homescan data, but racially and economically organic consumers are a mixed bag and vary by region. For example, studies show that lower income families choose to buy organic when possible as a means of preventative medicine. Organic vegetables appear to be the preferred produce of light users, while the heavy users seem to have an affinity for organic fruits. Most heavy users are found in the Southern and Western United States as the trend of growth increases.

The full article can be obtained through *Choices*, a quarterly publication of the American Agricultural Economics Association.