

U.S. CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR ELDERBERRY PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Increased production of North American Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) for its use in value-added secondary products is a prime example of the growth in non-traditional agroforestry product markets. Nonetheless, greater demand of elderberry products may be fostered through a better understanding of consumer preferences. With detailed information of the consumer market for elderberry products, prospective firms can develop strategies to enter the elderberry industry and firms currently supplying the market can develop strategies to increase their market share. The research is composed of both local exploratory consumer research and a national consumer preferences survey. The local exploratory research included: (1) a local consumer survey and (2) a consumer focus group. Information gained in exploratory research was then used to create an effective online consumer preference survey. The online survey gathered information from 1,048 household from the continental United States on their preferences for elderberry juice and jelly products. A cluster analysis was applied to define consumer market segments based on how respondents identified their lifestyles and whether they had purchased elderberry products. The four market segments were composed of health conscious elderberry consumers, less health conscious elderberry consumers, health conscious prospective consumers and less health conscious prospective consumers. A choice-based conjoint analysis was then used in the survey to estimate consumer sensitivity to product attributes of price, health related claims and the origin labels. As a result of the study, firms selling elderberry products will be able to increase the sale of their products through effective market strategies.