

Perception of the sustainability of fruits and vegetables by consumers. The case of the tomato.

Giulia Palma [*], Hayat Sbäi [*], Sophie-Anne Sauvegrain [**], Fatiha Fort [**] Martine Padilla [*]
 [*]: Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier [**]: SupAgro-Moisa

The respect of the environment represents an important challenge for the food industry and requires a global approach from production to consumption.

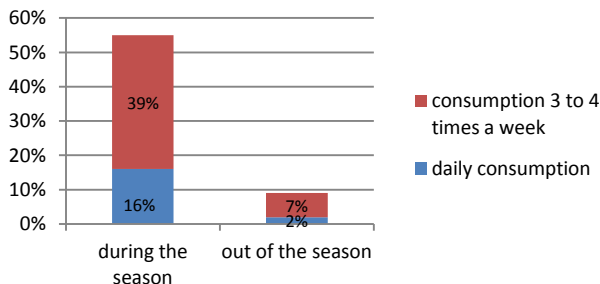
- This study focuses on the consumer, whose choices have an important influence on the whole food chain
- The growing demand for sustainable products make us wonder how consumers define sustainability: what is their perception of sustainable food? What ideas are related to the concept? Is there consistency between their ideas and their behaviour?

Methodology: As part of the Flonudep research project concerning the sustainability of the fruit and vegetables chain, this study consisted in a quantitative survey among eight hundred persons living in three French towns: Lille, Paris and Montpellier.

- Different aspects concerning purchasing, storage, cooking and waste management were considered, as well as perceptions of sustainable food.



Source: @ ville d'Adrar



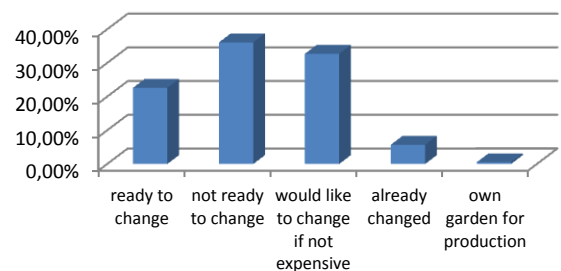
What is the food buying behaviour of French consumers?

- The majority goes shopping at supermarkets [75%]
- Distance covered for shopping varies between 1 and 25 km. The respondents go shopping either by foot (48%) or by car (42%) , namely in the South of France
- The majority (80%) stores the tomatoes in the refrigerator

From the consumer's point of view, what are the main characteristics of sustainable food?

- Geographic origin. Local production [75%].
- Production seasons and processes; 61% believes that seasonality has an impact on taste and nutritional quality of food.
- Organic and fair trade productions [35%].

Does the consumer intend to change his/her buying behaviour ?



- Sustainable food is positively perceived. Nevertheless, only 23% of the population is ready to modify their buying behaviour in favour of sustainable food, due to high prices in comparison to conventional food

As a conclusion, research should be addressed at finding solutions to transform the sustainable food market from a niche market to a mass one.