Hudson Valley Commercial Fruit Growers’ School

Factors to Consider when Assessing a Variety’s Potential

Bob Weybright
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Team

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Who really knows???
Apples as a category are stable

1. Berries
2. Apples
3. Bananas
4. Grapes
5. Citrus

1. Bananas
2. Apples
3. Berries
4. Oranges
5. Melons

Bob Weybright, ENY Commercial Horticulture Team
Indicators are for continued strong future consumer demand

- Apple popularity as a whole appears to be consistent

- The introduction of new varieties is likely to increase consumer interest….and confusion
  - Education on best use will become even more important
  - Proper timing of sales will become more important
  - Proper handling will become even more important

- Retail margin appears to be strong
  - Shelf space allocation remains strong
The crystal ball speaks:

- A smorgasbord of varieties will be expected
- Consumers will seek a variety of eating experiences
What about traditional varieties?

- They can survive with a solid sales and marketing strategy.
# Varieties accounting for 90% of sales

1. **Braeburn**
2. **Cortland**
3. **Empire**
4. **Fuji**
5. **Gala**
6. **Ginger Gold**
7. **Golden Delicious**
8. **Granny Smith**
9. **Honeycrisp**
10. **Ida Red**
11. **Jonagold**
12. **Jonathan**
13. **McIntosh**
14. **Red Delicious**
15. **Rome**

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12. **Rome Beauty**
13. **Northern Spy**
14. **York**
15. **Stayman**

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**US Apple Association 2013**

**AgMRC 2006**
Strategies to consider

- **Renaming**
  - Mullin’s Yellow Seedling ↔ Golden Delicious
  - Mutsu ↔ Crispin
  - Jonagold ↔ ??

- **Control volume**
  - Decrease volume, decrease price sensitivity
  - Increase price for the quantity demanded
  - Club varieties
  - Increase minimum quality standards
Look outside the box

- Look for alternative uses
  - Hard cider
  - Ingredient industry

- Look for alternative markets
  - Emerging consumer preferences
  - Export based on regional preferences
Know the competition and sell to our strengths

- Know and understand how NY varieties compare to those from other regions
- Sell based on the culinary experience
- Terroir!!
Understand the end consumer

- It's all in their head
  - The sensation/experience while eating the apple
  - Matches the memory of past experiences

- What goes on in the world around them
  - New cultivars
  - Other fruits
  - Out of season apples
  - New storage technologies
Don’t ignore the obvious: What can be grown well?

Perhaps the most important question is – what happens when people have a bad eating experience?

According to an Australian study:
- 58% change cultivar
- 31% purchase fewer apples
- 24% switch to other types of fruit
- 17% stop buying for a while
- 10% change to higher priced apples
- 5% switch brands
- <1% change to lower priced apples
There absolutely, positively must be value to the consumer.
The take away

- Consumers are seeking “change” and new experiences
- Apples are moving into the world of mainstream grocery marketing
- Slowing of “new varieties” does not appear to be on the horizon
- Looking for alternative uses of traditional apples will be required in the “twilight years” of a variety’s lifespan
- Traditional varieties will have their place on the shelf
- Excellent quality will be a must of any apple variety
So what factors should be considered?

- How many varieties can be managed
- What grows well or very well in a particular area
- How will you sell it
- What type of consumer does your sales outlet cater to
- What are the long term objectives of the farm
- What plantings are happening elsewhere
- Is it really an improvement
- What is and how does the Supply Chain affect the end consumer experience
Thank You!!

Questions/Comments?

Bob Weybright
Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Team
rw74@cornell.edu
518-727-6238