

## Consumers' Attitudes and Usage of Mangos

### **The Big Picture:**

A variety of factors influence consumers' decisions to buy mangos, from appearance to price to product quality. The reasons behind these decisions hold the key to future mango sales. Identifying how and why shoppers buy (or don't buy) mangos can lend insight into ways the fruit can be marketed to its maximum potential.

With this in mind, the NMB conducted a consumer "attitude and usage" telephone survey back in 2007 to gather initial consumer input about mangos. Four years later (in 2011), the board directed a similar study online using MarketTools Inc., San Francisco, Calif., to determine how consumers' attitudes and purchasing patterns had evolved. Specifically, the board wanted to determine the proportion of purchasers who bought and ate mangos and reasons that some people no longer bought the fruit (or were purchasing less). Additionally, the survey also served to gauge consumers' knowledge and understanding of mangos.

Those surveyed included three groups of U.S. residents: 1) Current purchasers – people who had purchased mangos within the past six months; 2) Past purchasers – people who had purchased mangoes before but did not buy them in the past six months; and 3) Non-purchasers – people who had never purchased mangos. Those interviewed comprised a nationally representative sample of 500 people who were the primary grocery shopper in their household and ranged in age from 21-69 years old.

From this research has come a clearer picture of who mango consumers are, why they buy the fruit, and what might encourage future purchases. The study also revealed what obstacles remain in getting all consumers to buy mangos. Armed with this knowledge, the mango industry can move forward by continuing its education about mango selection, ripening, cutting, and usage by targeting its marketing efforts to specific populations that will drive mango sales and increase purchases.

### **Overall Findings:**

- **Demand for mangos among current purchasers is substantial. Nearly all current purchasers surveyed (97%) plan to continue buying mangos;** 92% of past purchasers say they intend to buy mangos in the future.
  - The percentage of current purchasers buying mangos increased from 35% in 2007 to 46% in 2011.

- The frequency of mango purchase has increased from a year ago. More than one-third (36%) of current purchasers said they are buying more mangos than they did last year.
  - The incidence of people eating mangos increased from 67% in 2007 to 78% in 2011. Nearly all current mango purchasers (98%) have eaten mangos, and almost half of non-purchasers (49%) say they have tasted them. Interestingly, one-quarter of those surveyed (current purchasers, past purchasers, and non-purchasers) who have tried mangos have NEVER purchased them.
  - Hispanic purchasers are almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic White/Caucasians to be current purchasers of mangos.
- **There is a significant growth opportunity for mangos among non-purchasers.** Of the 500 shoppers surveyed in 2011, 41% had NEVER purchased mangos. Getting even a portion of these consumers to buy mangos would bring significant business to the mango industry.
    - Among non-purchasers, 46% said they simply “don’t think about them”.
    - Non-purchasers also admit that lack of knowledge is one reason that they don’t buy mangos. Forty-two percent of non-purchasers surveyed in 2011 said they didn’t know how to pick ripe fruit; another 32% said they didn’t know what to do with mangos.
- **Seasonality has a dramatic effect on mango sales.** Mango buyers are much more likely to buy the tropical fruit in the spring and summer than fall and winter. This finding was consistent for both 2007 and 2011.
    - Among current purchasers, 93% said they bought mangos from March through August, while only 59% said they purchased mangos from September through February.
    - 35% of those who serve mangos at home in the spring/summer months do so at least once a week. Only 14% of purchasers who typically serve mangos during the spring/summer said they serve them in the fall and winter at least once a week.
- **People who have mangos top-of-mind are more likely to put mangos on their shopping list.** Current mango purchasers are twice as likely to put mangos on their shopping list as past purchasers. Past purchasers are more apt to say that often the mangos that are available are not good quality. Nearly half of 2011 current and past purchasers said they buy mangos on impulse.
    - While current purchasers put mangos on their lists, the majority are not aware of different mango varieties. In both 2011 and 2007, more than 7 in 10 current purchasers said they had not seen or heard of any of six specific mango varieties.

- **Those surveyed had a positive attitude when it comes to mangos, and this will shape future purchases.** Significantly more of those surveyed in 2011 (current purchasers, past purchasers and non-purchasers) than in 2007 felt that mangos were healthy and nutritious, viewed them as an exotic fruit and/or a special treat, and thought they tasted great. Other factors are also helping to influence what mango purchasers will buy in the future.
  - Interest in organic mangos is increasing among ALL consumers. Among current mango purchasers, 38% of respondents in 2011 showed interest in organic fruit; in 2007, 29% said the same. Among all mango purchasers (past and current), 24% expressed interest in organic mangos in 2011; only 16% said the same in 2007.
  - Consumers seem to be equally interested in buying both whole mangos and sliced mangos. Research shows that current mango purchasers are twice as likely to buy whole mangos in the next six months as past purchasers.
  
- **Educational efforts teaching consumers how to slice a mango are paying off.** Nearly three-quarters of all 2011 respondents (current purchasers, past purchasers and non-purchasers) said they did not think mangos were difficult to slice. Just four years prior, more than half of those surveyed said they thought mangos were hard to slice.
  
- **As the years progress, consumers are becoming more satisfied with the quality of mangos and the flavor of the fruit.** Among current mango purchasers, 70% of 2011 shoppers said they were happy with mango quality, while only 54% said so in 2007. In the 2011 survey, 81% of total purchasers (or 93% of current purchasers) said they liked the flavor of mangos.
  - However, among current and past purchasers, nearly 2 in 5 respondents said that they had been disappointed with mango quality at some point. Current and past purchasers indicated that taste, lack of sweetness, and lack of ripeness were the main reasons for their disappointment in mango quality. They used “softness” or “firmness to the touch” as the main consideration in determining mango ripeness for both 2011 and 2007.
  
- **The ways current purchasers eat mangos have become more diverse than four years ago.** Today buyers are more likely to eat mangos as an ingredient rather than just simply eating the tropical fruit by itself. Current purchasers in 2011 were more likely to indulge in mangos at a restaurant, at a friend’s home, or somewhere else than current purchasers in 2007 were.
  - In 2007, 78% of current mango purchasers said they ate the fruit at home; in 2011, only 53% said the same.
  - In 2007, 56% of current mango purchasers said they ate the fruit by itself; in 2011, only 43% said they ate the fruit by itself. Mangos are generally eaten by themselves as a snack, breakfast or dessert.

## **Looking ahead:**

In analyzing consumer feedback, it is evident that demand for mangos continues to grow. The study shows that current mango purchasers plan to keep buying the fruit. Ensuring good flavor and ripeness of the fruit will bring more potential buyers.

Consumers who have NEVER purchased a mango represent a huge market opportunity. Marketing and promotion efforts to get mangos “top of mind” would greatly encourage these non-purchasers to make a purchase. Because most consumers (current purchasers, past purchasers and non-purchasers) already see mangos as being nutritious and healthy, promotions should play up these messages. Other strategies include: in-store sampling; demonstrations on how to peel and slice mangos; and information on how to select, store, and use mangos in recipes.

The NMB could recapture past mango purchasers by addressing their dissatisfaction with quality through education on how to select and use mangos. Offering less expensive mangos could also be effective in driving purchase interest among both current and past purchasers.

Striving for wider availability is also important. If more mangos were available in the fall and winter, sales could increase. Currently mango sales are strong during only about half the calendar year (spring and summer).

Above all, ensuring top quality fruit at retail is key. Consumers who are satisfied with their mango purchases will buy again.