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Marketing U.S. Lentils in Sri Lanka: A Consumer Preference Analysis

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Abstract

Lentils continue to occupy an important place in the human diet, especially in the developing countries as a source of protein, soluble and insoluble fiber, complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. According to the UN comtrade, U.S. has exported \$ 14.8 million worth lentils to the world in 2010. Proper understanding of that segment of population who pay more attention to the country of origin label is vitally important in strategic lentil marketing. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the socio-demographic, preference and behavioral attributes of consumers who think that country of origin is important while purchasing red lentils, using a logit model. An intercept survey of 300 consumers was carried out in 5 different districts of Sri Lanka. Survey was carried out between July-August 2010 in three outlet types – grocery store, supermarket and other shops. Results indicate that frequency of lentil consumption per day, those who use non-packed red lentils, those who use packed red lentils with store's own label, those who think brand is an important attribute, those who work in the government sector, those who make between Rs. 45,001 and 55,000 and those who make between Rs. 55,001 and 65,000 are more likely to consider country of origin as an important factor while purchasing red lentils. Similarly, those who buy red lentils from wholesale shop, those who consider color of red lentils as an important attribute, those who consider overall appearance as an important attribute, and number of employed males in a household are less likely to consider country of origin as an important factor while shopping for red lentils. Those who promote U.S. lentils in Sri Lanka will be able to strategically market lentils with specific attributes to target consumers in Sri Lanka, based on the results from this study.

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