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RESEARCH UPDATES

Missouri Consumers' Perceptions and Preferences For Locally Produced Wines and Other Beverages

by

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Abstract

Questionnaires were sent to 8,000 randomly selected households in the higher income metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis. The surveys were designed to address consumers' awareness, perceptions, and impressions of Missouri's wines and other beverages. Initial results indicate that 47 percent of the respondents were not familiar with Missouri wines. Of those who were familiar with Missouri wines: 1) 82 percent rated the quality of Missouri wines as good or excellent, 2) 95 percent described the prices of Missouri wines as being moderate or inexpensive, 3) 41 percent thought Missouri wines were not as good as California wines, 4) 43 percent said Missouri wine supplies were not available, and 5) 74 percent responded that the taste of Missouri wines was better than expected.

Research

Before prohibition, Missouri was the second largest producer and seller of wines. Since that time, Missouri's position in the wine industry has eroded significantly. The ability to formulate cost effective and sound marketing strategies could

ensure the success of Missouri's current wine industry and assist it in regaining some of the lost market share.

During Spring 1991, pre-notification letters, followed by surveys, and finally post-survey reminders, were sent to 8,000 randomly selected households in the higher income metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis. Zip code filters (based on average income levels) were used to define the sample population and Missouri Motor Vehicle registrations were used as the information bank. Questionnaires attempted to address consumers' awareness, perceptions, and impressions of Missouri's wines and other beverages. Returned were 1,898 surveys for a response rate of 23.7 percent. Data are being coded and a partial analysis should be ready by October. Collected data should identify important factors related to drinking occasions, price and variety preferences of wines, and consumers' attitudes and consumption patterns of various alcoholic products.

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It is increasingly evident that the emphasis on wine consumption is changing. Overall, nationwide consumption of wine has decreased in recent years and now, more than ever, locating brands and products that best satisfy discriminating consumer needs is becoming more important. The results of this investigation should provide Missouri grape producers and vintners with backgrounds of actual and potential customers; thus, better allocation of resources may prove to be supportive of the state's wine industry. By applying strategic marketing, the Missouri wine industry can more systematically define its target markets, promote and offer clearer differential advantages of Missouri wines over wines produced in other geographical regions, better determine the types and qualities of wines to be supplied, and improve current distribution systems.