Who Are the Consumers of Vidalia Onions?

Ecio F. Costa, Kent Wolfe, James E. Epperson, Chung L. Huang, and John C. McKissick

This study presents results of a telephone survey that was administered to primary food shoppers who had consumed Vidalia onions in the past. The survey samples were distributed according to the amount of Vidalia onions shipped to five different regions in the United States and weighed by the U.S. Census. Results indicate that Vidalia onions are the preferred sweet onion among consumers interviewed, that at-home consumption is highest, and that the quality of Vidalia onions remains high among the sample interviewed. Very little advertising was recalled, but in-store advertising was mentioned as the most effective.

The production and marketing of sweet Vidalia onions comprises an $82-million industry with an economic impact in 19 south Georgia counties of more than $270 million annually (Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service 2001). Figure 1 shows the 19 counties in Georgia that are eligible to produce Vidalia onions. The industry has grown steadily over the years but seems to have peaked in 1997 (Figure 2). In 1999, approximately 2,000 acres of onions were abandoned due to perceived marketing problems. In 2000, planted acres were reduced from 16,000 to 15,000 in an effort to restore profitable prices. Of 15,000 acres planted in 2001, only 12,400 acres were harvested. Thus there is substantial concern about the apparent decline in demand and the reasons behind it.

The Vidalia Onion Marketing Order was started in 1989 primarily to more effectively market Vidalia onions, and is currently administered by the Vidalia Onion Committee (U. S. Dept. of Agriculture 2001b). Under the marketing-order authorization, the Vidalia Onion Committee is responsible for production research, marketing research and development, and marketing-promotion programs including paid advertising. The Vidalia Onion Committee has a budget based on an assessment rate of $0.10 per 50-pound container.

The purpose of this study is to obtain a better understanding of Vidalia onion consumers and their preferences, purchasing and consumption habits, and perceptions of Vidalia onions and other sweet onions. In addition, the research investigates the most effective methods of informing consumers about the availability of Vidalia onions. Additionally, this study presents recommendations for future promotion expenditure based on analyses of a survey conducted by the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development at the University of Georgia.

Costa is professor in the Department of Economics, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil. Wolfe is public service assistant and Huang and McKissick are professors in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia.

Data and Methodology

To fulfill the objectives mentioned above, a national telephone survey was administered by the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development at the University of Georgia (Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development 2001a). To obtain the most reliable information on shopping habits, the survey was administered to the person primarily responsible for purchasing grocery items in the household. A screening question was used to eliminate potential respondents who do not consume sweet onions. Therefore the data reflects primary food shoppers who eat sweet onions.

Vidalia onions are consumed nationally, but some markets' demand for Vidalia onions is greater than others. It is also important to investigate regional differences in consumption, shopping habits, and sweet onion awareness and to ensure sufficient data in each region for cross-sectional analysis. As a result, a quota system was used to collect a specific number of completed surveys in specific regions. The different quotas for different regions were derived using Vidalia onion shipping data obtained from the Vidalia Onion Committee (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture 2001a). The shipping destinations are categorized into five regions, as presented in Table 1. The pounds of Vidalia onions shipped

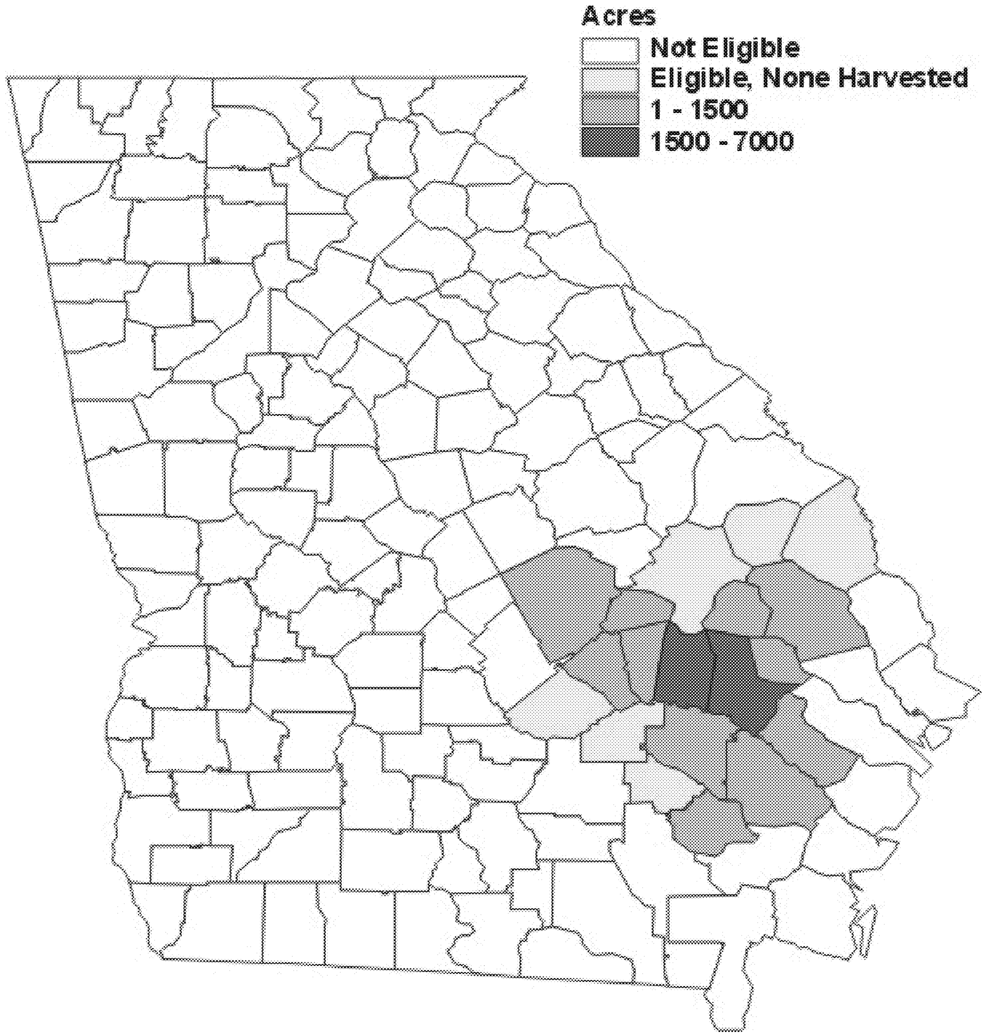

Figure 1. Counties Eligible to Produce Vidalia Onions in Georgia and Respective Harvested Acreage.

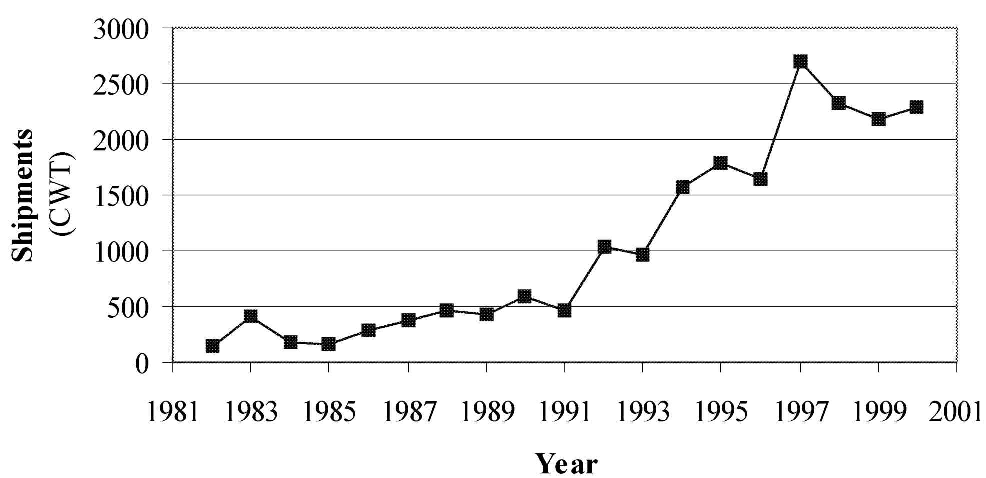

Figure 2. Vidalia Onion Shipments (Dry Onions).
Source: U. S. Dept. of Agriculture (2001a).

Table 1.Shipping Regions and Completed Surveys by Region.

Region	Amount (lb.)	Percentage	Number of Interviews
New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NY, NJ, PA)	382,357	35%	177
East South Central (GA, TN, KY, AL, MS)	180,072	17%	83
Mountain, North, and South West Central (CA, OR, WA, AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, UT, WY, AK, LA, OK, TX, IA, KA, MN, NE, ND, SD)	234,188	22%	108
East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WS)	145,261	13%	67
South Atlantic (DL, FL, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV)	140,769	13%	65
Total	1,082,647	100%	500

to each region is divided by the total pounds Vidalia onions shipped to determine the percentage of Vidalia onions shipped to each region. This percentage is used to determine the percentage of completed interviews per region. This allows for a significant number of completed surveys in each region for a cross-sectional comparison and simultaneously gives a "truer" division of observations per region based on the amounts shipped. For example, the quota for the New England region is 177, meaning that 177 interviews need to be completed in that region.

The regional survey data is aggregated and weighted to reflect the total U.S. population. Census data are used to determine each states' percentage of the total U.S. population (U.S. Dept. of Commerce 2001). A weight is calculated for each state and applied to the completed survey to reflect the national population.

To assess the percentage of sweet onion consumption in the United States, the National Vidalia Onion Consumer Survey included a screening question that asked potential respondents if they eat sweet onions. The data collected on this question indicated that 227 interviews were terminated after respondents indicated that they do not consume sweet onions. Therefore, a total of 727 respondents were asked if they eat sweet onions until the limit of 500 positive observations was reached. This result indicates that approximately 69% of the randomly selected respondents contacted for this study eat sweet onions. This figure may be used as an approximation of the percentage of the United States population that eats sweet onions.

Results and Discussion

It is important to derive a measurement of consumer awareness of a product before developing and implementing a marketing strategy. If there is insufficient consumer awareness regarding a product like Vidalia onions, the marketing strategy must first focus on introducing the product to consumers. Introducing products to consumers requires resources and time and is fundamental in developing a successful marketing strategy.

The information found in Table 2 reveals that Vidalia onions are the most widely recognized sweet onion. Approximately 73.8% of all respondents have heard of Vidalia onions and 81.1% are familiar with them. This result indicates that a high level of Vidalia onion consumer awareness exists. Marketing strategies therefore can focus on promoting Vidalia onions as opposed to increasing consumer awareness. Results are also encouraging because the awareness level of Vidalia onions is significantly higher than for other sweet onions.

Looking at the five different regions, it is apparent that Vidalia onion awareness in the Mountain, North, and South West Central region is significantly lower than in the remaining four regions. The Vidalia Onion Committee's marketing strategy in this region needs to have a significant component addressing consumer awareness.

The information in Table 2 reflects unaided consumer awareness. The respondents were asked, "Which brands of sweet onions are you familiar with?" The results suggest that Vidalia onion is a widely recognized brand.

Results in the second part of Table 2 reflect

Table 2. Awareness and Familiarity with Specific Sweet Onions (%).

Onion	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
			Onion Awareness			
Vidalia	73.8	82.0	88.0	57.4	89.6	83.1
Texas 1015	19.2	11.8	27.7	23.2	13.4	20.0
Walla-Walla	19.2	9.6	10.8	29.6	13.4	13.9
Maui	8.4	6.2	7.2	13.9	1.5	4.6
Other	6.1	7.9	8.4	3.7	6.0	9.2
DK/RF/NA*	15.2	13.5	10.8	20.4	9.0	12.3
			Onion Familiarity			
Vidalia	81.1	93.1	96.4	60.7	89.7	100.0
Texas 1015	23.3	9.9	32.7	32.1	7.69	31.3
Walla-Walla	23.7	12.9	3.6	42.9	15.4	9.4
Maui	9.4	2.0	9.1	19.6	0.0	3.1
Other	11.0	17.8	14.6	5.4	10.3	15.6
DK/RF/NA*	3.8	2.0	0.0	5.4	7.7	0.0

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

consumers' aided awareness for various sweet onions. This is an aided-awareness answer, since respondents were asked if they had heard of each sweet onion. There appear to be some inconsistencies; more respondents mention they are familiar with Vidalia onions unaided than aided. To avoid introducing bias into the results, there is no mention of any specific sweet onion prior to these two questions.

The information in Table 2 is very encouraging. The vast majority of sweet onion consumers are already aware of Vidalia onions, so the need to educate sweet onion consumers about Vidalia onions is minimal. Therefore, the Vidalia Onion Committee can focus its efforts on promoting and marketing Vidalia onions rather than trying to generate consumer awareness.

Favorite Sweet Onion

In addition to measuring consumer awareness, it is important to determine consumer preferences for sweet onions. Determining consumer preference also provides information on the sweet onion industry leadership. Respondents were asked to name their favorite sweet onion. Results are presented in Table 3. Vidalia onions are mentioned significantly more often than any other sweet onion. It appears that Vidalia onions are the preferred sweet onion among sweet onion consumers. However, looking across the five different regions, consumers' preference for Vidalia onions in the Mountain, North, and South West Central region is significantly lower than in the remaining four regions.

According to the information in Table 3, Vidalia onions do not seem to have competition in the sweet onion market, except in the Mountain, North, and South West Central region. This information may provide a useful marketing tool. For instance, a claim can be made that Vidalia onions are preferred over Walla-Walla sweet onions 10 to 1. As already mentioned, the preference for Vidalia onions in the Mountain, North, and South West Central region is significantly lower than in the other four regions, and residents of this region is less likely to have heard of Vidalia onions than are their counterparts in other regions. The reason for the lower preference level in this region may be attributed to the lack of exposure and familiarity with Vidalia onions, and not to better competing products.

The high level of consumer preference for

Table 3. Consumer-Revealed Preference Toward a Favorite Sweet Onion.

Onion	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
Vidalia	63.1	73.0	83.1	38.9	82.1	84.6
Walla-Walla	6.3	2.8	1.2	13.9	0.0	0.0
Texas 1015	5.0	2.3	2.4	10.2	0.0	1.5
Maui	2.8	1.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0
Other	4.5	2.3	7.23	7.4	3.0	0.0
DK/RF/NA*	18.3	19.1	6.0	23.2	14.9	13.9

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

Vidalia onions may be used to leverage relationships with wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. This information may be included on marketing materials advertising Vidalia onions as the nation's most-preferred sweet onion.

In addition, there may be opportunities within eating establishments to gain market share or promote Vidalia onions. Eating establishments may be convinced to promote Vidalia onions on their menus and other marketing material. For instance, some restaurants could use slogans such as, "We only use Vidalia onions on our sandwiches."

The title of "favorite sweet onion" differentiates Vidalia onions from other sweet onions. To ensure this favored ranking it is important that Vidalia onions maintain their quality. If there is a lapse in quality, other sweet onions may be able to increase their preferences among consumers' purchase decisions.

Sweet Onion Purchases

The stated preference for sweet onions is verified by the fact that consumers report purchasing Vidalia onions significantly more often than any of the competing sweet onions (Table 4). The majority of purchases are made in grocery stores (Table 5). This result suggests a marketing campaign that stresses point-of-purchase marketing material that could be utilized in grocery stores. A common marketing theme would strengthen the Vidalia onion brand image as well as provide effective marketing material. According to Costa et al. (2001), in-store and point-of-purchase advertising are very effective in marketing and promoting fresh produce.

Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Consistent with a produce managers' survey presented by Costa et al. (2001), produce freshness is a significant factor in consumers' fresh-produce purchasing decisions. As the results in Table 6 suggest, freshness is more important than price, brand name, or packaging in the consumer's sweet onion purchase decision process. This can be interpreted as a baseline on which all sweet onions must compete. Assuming that freshness is as important as stated, consumers will switch to competing products if there is a freshness issue. Therefore, significant emphasis must be placed on providing fresh Vidalia onions or consumers may switch to competing sweet onions. The concept of freshness should be worked into any future marketing campaigns.

A previous Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development study on consumer attitudes and perceptions about Georgia-grown fresh produce (CAED 2001b) shows that quality is another key factor in consumers' fresh-produce purchasing decisions. Nearly two-thirds of the shoppers indicate that quality is the most important factor in where they shop for fresh produce, while price (19%) and convenience (14%) are less important.

The respondents are asked whether they believe the quality of Vidalia onions has increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last three years (Table 7). The majority of respondents indicate the quality of Vidalia onions has remained the

Table 4. Frequency of Sweet Onion Purchases.

Onion	Total (n=447)	New England (n=163)	East South Central (n=80)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=79)	East North Central (n=63)	South Atlantic (n=62)
Vidalia	80.9	87.7	85.0	64.6	88.9	95.2
Texas 1015	8.6	1.2	10.0	16.5	4.8	4.8
Walla-Walla	6.6	2.5	2.5	15.2	1.6	1.6
Maui	3.8	0.0	0.0	10.1	0.0	1.2
None	2.7	1.2	2.5	3.8	3.2	1.6
Other	8.3	8.6	11.3	10.1	6.4	4.8
DK/RF/NA*	5.3	4.9	5.0	7.6	6.4	0.0

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

Table 5. Distribution of Vidalia Onion Purchases by Location (Multiple Responses) (%).

Location	Total (n=413)	New England (n=152)	East South Central (n=76)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=66)	East North Central (n=59)	South Atlantic (n=60)
Grocery Store	91.0	92.1	92.1	87.9	86.4	98.3
Roadside Stand	10.0	13.8	17.1	16.7	3.4	5.0
Farmer	6.0	2.6	5.3	9.1	3.4	6.7
Other	7.0	5.9	14.5	7.6	6.8	6.7
DK/RF/NA*	1.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	3.4	0.0

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

Table 6. Factors Influencing Purchase Decision of Produce (%).

Factor	Total (n=413)	New England (n=152)	East South Central (n=76)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=66)	East North Central (n=59)	South Atlantic (n=60)
Freshness	51.6	48.7	36.8	53.0	59.3	51.7
Price	23.3	25.6	27.6	27.8	13.6	23.3
Brand Name	18.5	17.1	26.3	18.2	20.3	15.0
Packaging	3.4	2.6	5.3	1.5	3.4	6.7
DK/RF/NA*	3.4	5.9	4.0	1.5	3.4	3.3

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

same over the last three years. Sixteen percent of respondents perceive Vidalia onion quality to have increased over the last three years, while nearly ten percent thought the quality has decreased.

Given this information it is important to emphasize the quality of Vidalia onions in promotion and advertising by the Vidalia Onion Committee. Vidalia onions need to set the standard in terms of quality and freshness to maintain and extend their leadership in the sweet onion market. Consumers' purchasing decisions are heavily swayed by product quality and freshness, and these issues need to be emphasized.

Another way to measure consumers' perception of a product is to ask them the first thing that comes to mind when they think about a product. Results in Table 8 suggest that the respondents generally think of sweetness when they think of Vidalia onions. Interestingly, there were no negative responses associated with Vidalia onions. This is encouraging, as these types of questions are reliable in identifying potential problems associated with a product. Results in Table 8 also suggest that consumers' perceptions of Vidalia onions are positive and associated with favorable product features like sweetness, taste, Georgia, and freshness.

Vidalia Onions Consumption by Location

The vast majority of Vidalia onions appear to be consumed at home (Table 9). This may be attributed to the fact that Vidalia onions may not be featured or recognized at restaurants. Given that Vidalia onions appear to be America's favorite sweet onion, the Vidalia Onion Committee should direct a portion of its marketing campaign to the restaurant industry. Restaurants should be informed that Vidalia onions are the most popular sweet on-

Table 7. Perceptions of Vidalia Onion Quality (%).

Quality	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
Increased	16.2	12.3	17.5	17.7	19.1	14.5
Stayed the Same	54.9	63.8	53.8	45.6	52.4	66.1
Decreased	9.6	8.0	21.3	3.8	12.7	14.5
DK/RF/NA*	19.3	16.0	7.5	32.9	15.9	4.8

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

Table 8. "Top of Mind" Perception of Vidalia Onions.

Response	Percentage (n=80)
Sweet	30.0%
Taste/flavor	17.5%
Food Related	8.8%
Onion Rings	7.5%
Georgia	6.3%
Onions	3.8%
Freshness	3.8%
Mild	2.3%
Other	20.0%

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Vidalia Onion Consumption by Location and by Package Preference (%).

Location	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
			Location			
Home	88.9	91.4	96.3	81.0	92.1	95.2
Restaurant	21.3	21.5	30.0	16.5	30.2	17.7
Other	3.9	2.5	7.5	3.8	4.8	3.2
DK/RF/NA*	4.5	1.2	0.0	11.4	1.6	0.0
			Package Type			
Bagged	41.3	30.5	51.3	41.9	41.1	48.3
Bulk	46.6	55.6	32.9	51.6	32.3	41.4
Other	9.8	11.9	11.8	4.8	16.1	8.6
DK/RF/NA*	2.3	2.0	4.0	1.6	3.6	1.7

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

ion and therefore should be served at their establishments. In addition, the high level of Vidalia onion brand recognition could be incorporated into the restaurant's marketing material and menus in much the same way as is done with other food and beverage products.

Package Preference for Vidalia Onion Purchases

Sweet onion consumers appear to be divided on package preference (Table 9). Forty percent of consumers prefer to purchase bagged onions, while 46% prefer to buy their onions in bulk. Therefore, it is important to provide consumers with both options or risk losing sales. There also appears to be some regional packaging preferences. For instance, residents in New England and the Mountain, North, and South West Central Regions are more likely to purchase bulk Vidalia onions, while consumers in the East South Central and South Atlantic regions prefer to purchase bagged Vidalia onions.

Weekly Vidalia Onion Consumption

Results indicate that most households consume one or two Vidalia onions per week (Table 10). One method of increasing Vidalia onion sales is to increase weekly household consumption. Providing new and easy-to-follow recipes at the point of purchase or in advertising could stimulate additional weekly consumption.

Vidalia Onion Purchase Frequency

Most consumers in this study purchase Vidalia onions weekly (Table 11). This is consistent with typical household shopping patterns. Results suggest that the majority of households purchase Vidalia onions as part of their weekly shopping trip. Therefore, implementing an effective in-store promotional campaign would help consumers locate Vidalia onions and attract their attention away from competing sweet onions.

Vidalia Onion Advertising Awareness

Vidalia onion advertising awareness is very low given the level of product awareness. According to the results of this survey, 87% of consumers are aware of Vidalia onions, but only 13.5% are aware of Vidalia advertising and promotion (Table 12). This result shows an opportunity to increase consumer advertising awareness via effective marketing and promotional campaigns that will generate

Table 10. Household Weekly Consumption of Vidalia Onions (During Season) (%).

Number of Onions	Total (n=312)	New England (n=117)	East South Central (n=55)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=49)	East North Central (n=41)	South Atlantic (n=50)
0	1.8	2.6	1.8	2.0	0.0	2.0
1	25.0	25.6	20.0	30.6	29.3	14.0
2	22.3	26.5	25.5	20.4	12.2	28.0
3	15.8	14.5	14.6	16.3	24.4	10.0
4	9.7	10.3	16.4	2.0	12.2	16.0
5	7.3	6.8	5.5	10.2	4.9	6.0
6+	11.0	6.0	14.4	13.4	12.1	12.0
DK/RF/NA*	7.1	7.7	1.8	6.1	4.9	12.0

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

Table 11. Frequency Distribution of Vidalia Onion Purchases (%).

Purchased	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
Weekly	30.3	29.6	26.3	31.8	32.2	31.7
Every 2 Weeks	24.1	27.0	18.4	19.7	25.4	30.0
Daily	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Monthly	39.4	37.5	51.3	40.9	35.6	31.7
Other	3.0	0.7	0.0	6.1	5.1	3.3
DK/RF/NA*	3.2	5.3	4.0	1.5	1.7	3.3

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

increased onion sales. The source of positive advertising recall is primarily linked to retail stores. Newspaper inserts, in-store displays, and in-store feature ads represent nearly 50% of all advertising recall (Table 13). Results indicate that advertising in television and radio is important but in-store advertising will reach more consumers.

Most-Effective Channels for Reaching Consumers

Results indicate that consumers rely on newspaper inserts, in-store displays, and in-store promotions to obtain information on fresh produce (Table 14). Surprisingly, television advertising ranks low in providing fresh-produce information to the consumer. The produce-manager study by Costa et al. (2001) shows similar findings. According to primary food shoppers and produce managers, in-store activities are a very effective method of informing consumers about fresh produce. Further, when asked specifically about obtaining information on seasonal fresh produce, the same channels are mentioned (Table 14).

This information can be used in developing future marketing strategies. The information is also useful because coordinating in-store promotional

Table 12. Awareness of Vidalia Onion Advertising (%).

Aware	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
Yes	13.5	15.7	21.7	7.4	19.4	16.9
No	81.2	82.6	74.7	84.3	76.1	80.0
Other	5.2	1.7	3.6	8.3	4.5	3.1

Table 13. Source of Advertising Recall for Vidalia Onions(%).

Source	Total (n=99)	New England (n=31)	East South Central (n=21)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=17)	East North Central (n=16)	South Atlantic (n=13)
TV Ad/Promotion	27.1	16.1	19.1	23.5	31.3	46.2
Newspaper Insert	26.4	41.9	23.8	17.7	31.3	23.1
In-Store Display	16.5	35.5	9.5	11.8	12.5	15.4
In-Store Feature Ad	4.3	12.9	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0
Radio Ad	3.3	3.2	14.3	0.0	6.3	0.0
Other	13.5	12.9	19.1	11.8	12.5	15.4

Table 14. Main Source of Information of Fresh Produce and of the Availability of Seasonal Fresh Produce (%).

Source	Total (n=500)	New England (n=177)	East South Central (n=83)	Mtn./North & South West Central (n=108)	East North Central (n=67)	South Atlantic (n=65)
			Produce Information			
Newspaper Insert	30.5	29.8	31.3	27.8	37.3	30.8
In-Store Display	22.1	24.7	22.9	18.5	26.9	23.1
In-Store Promotion	15.8	11.2	12.1	20.4	11.9	15.4
TV Ad/Promotion	2.8	6.2	1.2	1.9	0.0	4.6
In-Store Feature Ad	2.7	3.4	1.2	1.9	6.0	1.5
Radio Advertising	0.2	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	19.4	17.4	16.9	24.1	10.5	20.0
DK/RF/NA*	6.6	7.3	12.1	5.6	7.5	4.6
			Seasonal Availability			
Newspaper Insert	39.3	38.2	43.4	38.9	38.8	40.0
In-Store Display	22.6	24.2	20.5	22.2	19.4	26.2
TV Ad/Promotion	8.3	9.6	7.2	7.4	9.0	9.2
In-Store Feature Ad	5.0	5.1	2.4	4.6	6.0	6.2
Radio Advertising	1.1	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.5
Other	12.9	12.9	15.7	14.8	11.9	7.7
DK/RF/NA*	10.8	9.6	9.6	11.1	13.4	9.2

* Don't know, refused to answer, and/or not aware.

activities may be less costly than television and radio advertising. Supermarket chains are generally willing to partner with commodity groups to feature and promote products in their weekly newspaper inserts. The Vidalia Onion Committee should develop a plan to utilize this marketing channel, as it provides an effective means of reaching and informing consumers about seasonal fresh produce.

Conclusions

Results in this survey indicate that sweet onion consumers not only know Vidalia onions but also rely on them as the sweet onion of choice, indicating that the quality of Vidalia onions still remains high. However, very little advertising is recalled. Home is still the primary place for consumption of Vidalia onions. Current advertising is directed toward at-home consumption and may explain this result. Among the sources of advertising, in-store promotion still appears to generate the highest consumption of Vidalia onions. Consumption away from home might be increased if there is a greater emphasis on restaurant advertising.

References

Center for Agricultural and Economic Development. 2001a. Athens, GA. National Vidalia Onion Consumer Survey. Unpublished Material.

——. 2001b. Athens, GA. Consumer Attitudes And Perceptions About Georgia-Grown Fresh Produce Survey. Unpublished Material.

Costa, E. F., J. E. Epperson, C. L. Huang, J. C. McKissick, B. Thomas, and K. Wolfe. 2001. "Impacts of Advertising and Promotions on the Demand for Scanned Purchases of Vidalia Onions." Center for Agricultural and Economic Development Report, 01-42.

Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service. 2001. "Georgia Crop Estimates: Onions." http://www.nass.usda.gov/ga/cropests/onions.txt.

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. 1996. *The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996.* http://www.usda.gov/farmbill/title0.htm.

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service. 2001a. *Fruit and Vegetable Market News. National Potato and Onion Report.* Various issues. Washington, D.C.

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service. 2001b. *Vidalia Marketing Order. Fruit and Vegetable Programs: Summaries of Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Order and Agreement Programs. Marketing Order No. 955: Vidalia Onions*. Washington, D.C. http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/mosummary.htm

U. S. Dept. of Commerce, U. S. Census Bureau. 2001. Census 2000. Washington, D.C.

U. S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2001. *Consumer Price Index—All Urban Consumers.* Current Series. Washington, D.C. http://stats.bls.gov/cpihome.htm