

# Supermarket of the future: consumer choice and eating habits



## Have you ever wondered how the supermarket of the future will look like?

The European Commission teamed up with Coop Italy to carry out an experiment in the premises of the 'supermarket of the future' during the Expo Milan. The purpose of the exercise was to see how consumers react to modern ways of presenting information on products.

Consumers who visited the pavilions could enter the supermarket and come across a range of modern ways of presenting information, such as ad-hoc interactive screens available next to each product. Participants of the experiment were asked about their understanding and use of "best before" dates and about their choice when confronted with imperfect, strangely shaped fruits and vegetables.

## What have we learnt from the experiment?

- \* Only **47%** of consumers correctly identified the meaning of the '**Best Before Date**'.
  - \* The presence of a '**Best Before Date**' makes consumers **less likely to throw away** a product before that date is reached. The presence of either a 'best before date' or a 'production date' makes consumers more likely to throw it away after the date has passed.
  - \* In the supermarket of the future, when consumers would be using interactive screens, most likely **they would pay more attention to price, nutritional values and origin of product**. They would most likely pay less attention to allergy or environmental information.
  - \* Consumers' willingness to buy **imperfect shaped foods** (fruits, vegetables) increases as their price is reduced.
- If the price reduction would be moderate, **31%** consumers would buy imperfect fruits/vegetables. If the price reduction would be high, **39%** consumers would do so.
- \* However, even without a price reduction, if **a persuasive message** was given on the label, more consumers would choose imperfect fruit/vegetables.

**"Authenticity" message** would persuade 41% consumers to make a purchase.

**"Anti-food waste" message** would persuade 42% consumers to make a purchase.

\* If we combine **an awareness message** on the label with **price reduction**, consumers' willingness to buy imperfect fruit/vegetables raises even more to approximately 50%.

