

When we go to the supermarket, all fruits and vegetables look good. Also, they look the same. Fruits and vegetables that are clean, unblemished, of a uniform size, shape and colour. They are what people think fresh, tasty, and high in nutrition. Does that mean farm, local products are not? Are those different from supermarket ones? That's just a misconception. Supermarkets fruit and vegetable standard has influenced many people on their food choices, attitudes and beliefs.

Student 4: High Achieved

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1

Supermarket products are clean, unblemished, of a uniform size, shape and colour. Supermarkets arrived in the 1960s and since 1960s consumers were looking at the clean products. Now, consumers are used to buying the clean product. They think it is normal to get those. A major goal of marketing is to change our perception of what is "normal". Advertising and promotions push things until we consider it normal. (Dr Rosemary Stanton, Nutritionist). Consumers now have a perception that unclean, blemished, different sized fruit and vegetables are not good and they lack nutrition and flavour. However, the shape and look does not matter. Small, deformed apples are perfectly fine to eat. I went to an orchard and picked some. The apples were small, deformed, blemished and different colours. Comparing them to the supermarket apple, orchard apple was much fresher and tastier. Orchard apple was much crunch, sweet and fresh. Supermarket apples looked clean, big and fresh, but it wasn't as good as it looked like. Today, the big supermarkets routinely stipulate to farmers what their product – both conventional and organic – looks like (BBC News, Strange Fruit).

2

Since supermarkets are so strict on standard, every year, thousands of tons of fruit and vegetables are rejected by supermarkets not on the taste grounds, but because they don't look good. (BBC News, Strange Fruit). Because the consumers are so used to seeing clean products, supermarkets only put those products on the shelf. They also demand farmers to "produce" clean products. Supermarket demands affect farmers, because most of their crops can't be sold, because they are blemished or different shapes. This makes farms who can't sell their crops to disappear. Farmers can't earn enough money because they could not sell their crops and which makes farms to close down. Some farms turn to local markets where they sell deformed crops. I usually shop at the Sunday market and the produce doesn't look the same. Some tastes better than supermarket product.

3

In the past, when there weren't any supermarkets around, people didn't care what their food looked like. In the old days, people grew their own food and ate them from the garden. The fruits and vegetables were fresh but they were not always pretty. I had no problem eating oddly shaped fruit and vegetables that had odd blemish on its skin. (Interview with a School Elder). However, now, not many people prefer oddly shaped fruit and vegetables. Now a days, 86.9% of New Zealanders shop in the supermarket 'weekly' or more often (Research facts from the HSC)

4

We did a survey at our school and showed the students two types of produce. The majority of students preferred Type A, which is the supermarket product. Most of the reason was 'normal, clean, big, and not oddly shaped'. Students didn't know that orchard apples actually taste better, dark skinned carrot is perfectly fine to eat (I have tried it) and oddly shaped tomatoes are fine. The reason why the majority of students chose 'normal' produce is because they have been seeing only supermarket products. The supermarket wants consumers to think supermarket fruit and vegetables are the normal, fresh product.

5

Some of the other things that the supermarket impacted on us is the **seasonable fruit and vegetables**. In the supermarket we can find the strawberry and blueberry all year round. Is it normal? No. Strawberries are summer fruits. However, that is what we expect - to have strawberries all year round. **Supermarket has affected us to think having "not in season" fruit is normal. A major goal of marketing is to change our perception of what is "normal"** (Dr Rosemary Stanton, Nutritionist).

6

*Supermarkets* have all sorts of different fruit and vegetables. Some of them are in season, but some of them are not. This isn't that bad for consumers. Sometimes this is **good, because in hotels or restaurants they need a variety of fruit and vegetables**. At our school we did a survey on seasonal fruit and vegetables. **We gave students random fruit and vegetables to guess the season. None got all the seasons right. Some knew a few, but most of them had no idea about the season. Supermarkets try to make people or consumers to think non seasonal fruit and vegetables are always in supermarket and it's normal.**

7

In the old days when there was no supermarket, people use to eat seasonally. They couldn't have strawberries in winter, but they enjoyed kiwifruit. **'Eating seasonally has taught me to really appreciate and value the taste of the good home grown food and I enjoy cooking it.'** (*Interview with a School Elder*). People use to eat seasonally and fresh. Because they are not in season in New Zealand, they have to be imported from other countries like USA, Philippines, and China. USA to New Zealand is a long way for fruit and vegetables. Its fresh when it's picked in USA but when it gets to New Zealand it can't be that fresh. When consumers see the non-season fruit and vegetables they think it's fresh because it's what supermarkets are trying to do.

8