

Consumer Preferences for Delaware Oysters

An Economic Evaluation of Marketing Messages



Marketing Attributes

Consumers value the smell of the oysters the most, followed by saltiness, meat size and meat color.

Infrequent and first time consumers prefer wild-caught oysters while frequent consumers prefer aquaculture oysters.

Consumers in our study were willing to pay an average of \$0.81 per oyster.

All else held constant:

- Female consumers are willing to pay 33% less per oyster compared to male consumers.
- As the age of consumers increases by one year, their willingness-to-pay drops by 2.4%.



Marketing “Local”

Compared to tourists, local residents are more willing to pay higher prices for oysters accompanied by the Inland Bays Oysters logo. In response to this logo:

28%



28% of *locals* would pay a higher price for oysters with this logo.



13%



13% of *tourists* would pay a higher price for oysters with this logo.

Additionally, consumers are willing to pay 16% more for oysters that are harvested locally.

*Note: Locals are represented by Delaware residents. Tourists are represented by participants recruited at the Lewis-Cape May ferry terminal.

Marketing Environmental Services



Consumers care about the environment

In general, consumers are willing to pay higher prices for oysters that improve water quality.



Information matters, but less may be more

When provided with some information about oysters’ ability to filter and clean water, consumers were more likely to buy oysters from moderate or high nutrient waters (where oysters are most helpful to the environment). However, when consumers received more detailed information about how oysters can improve low quality water situations, they switched and preferred oysters from low nutrient waters (where oysters are less helpful).



*Note: Delaware Inland Bays waters are rated as moderate nutrient waters.

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