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**Fruit Quality Preference and Availability of Quality Fruit: A Case Study with ‘Honeycrisp' Apple, Poster Board #053**

*Tuesday, July 31, 2012*

*Grand Ballroom*

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In a previous study with untrained consumer panels we pointed out that ‘Honeycrisp’ is a highly favored apple cultivar because of its quality features. Fruit quality of the same cultivar, however, can vary widely by growing site, production technology, etc. Therefore, fruit quality does not always meet consumer expectations. The aim of this study was to investigate fluctuations in fruit quality on shelves of supermarkets/grocery stores. Fruit quality of ‘Honeycrisp’ apple was determined after random purchase occasions (once a month) from four supermarkets/grocery stores (Buehler’s, Giant Eagle, Heinen’s, Walmart) in the Cleveland, OH area. ‘Honeycrisp’ apples were available from two seasons; between 2010 December and 2011 April, and between 2011 September and 2012 April. The following fruit quality parameters were measured: fruit size, color, soluble solids concentration, and titratable acidity. An untrained consumer panel of 110 participants evaluated ‘Honeycrisp’ fruit samples after a random purchase from the four different supermarkets/grocery stores for appearance, texture, and taste. Fruit quality and consumer preference of ‘Honeycrisp’ apples varied widely among grocery stores at a given purchasing occasion, and also over time within the same supermarket/grocery store.

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