Red Orange Market Today’S Trend

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1. In the last few years in developing countries agro-food product demand has become healthier and healthier under a social economic profile. The evolution of such products has gone through different steps. The contribution to satisfy essential needs, such as mere survival; the increase of quantity amounts in relation to incomes; the property of taste satisfaction and well-being sensation; the support of incorporated-services, such as the preparation of ready-to-eat meals; pre-cooked food; frozen food; etc…Least but not last the research of the so-called food satisfaction, including bio-products, typical and traditional dishes, etc… Today’s new trend of agro-food product demand is function of a diet and therapeutic logic, including light and functional food. Consumers, in fact, are interested in agro-food products that are healthy, and make their choice according to nutrients and colours (chromotherapy). Oranges have become a fascinating pot melting so many factors that escape full analysis. Recent trend of healthy product consumption has caused interest towards pigmented oranges to grow. These, in fact, have chemicals-physical, pharmacological, and organoleptic-sensorial properties that blonde ones do not. For this reason and in consideration of today’s tendency to carry out studies about nutraceutic food (drug-food), we have decided to attend the 14th International Scientific Congress CNIC 2005, to let everybody know that by the Agrarian Faculty of the University of Catania we have been carrying out market research about red orange consumption in order to develop adequate intervention strategies aimed at leading initiatives for the exaltation of Sicilian red oranges and of their strong and peculiar typicality. We have also considered the fact that Sicilian orange-growing is undergoing a depression phase especially as far as exportation is concerned. This affecting not only fresh products but orange juices above all because of heavy importation. The management of the market is a critical aspect of Sicilian red (blood) producing system. That’s due to its “split” character in which the trade phase is independent from the production one and somehow separate from the local production system, so limiting the marketing of products to a great extent.

Researches carried out in different European countries about blood orange consumption have revealed that each different case on its own drives purchase and consumption. Such criteria that orient consumers behaviour and for this reason set the new consumption trend, can be gathered in two big categories according to their variables. The first category includes social-economic variables, that is, the changes occurred in the social assessment of the work and the demographic distribution. It is characterized by the research of time-saving services and by the tendency to destructure meals. The second one includes social-cultural variables focusing on the research of individual wellbeing.

Concerning the first case our surveys have shown an increase in the replacement of fruit for fresh oranges with juices. Juice industry, in fact, has always been bound to blonde oranges but now it is involving red ones thanks to the fact that consumers have given up their prejudices towards the red color of the juice obtained from blood oranges. This circumstance has allowed blood oranges gaining an important role within the new consumption trend. So that in late ’90s today’s trend towards diet and healthy characteristics joined the social-economic aspects of this system becoming fundamental. Our researches have shown an upgoing trend in blood orange consumption for the certified hygienic-sanitary characteristics of such fruits and the presence of natural colouring agents that are good for the prevention of some human pathologies.

The analysis within European countries concerning Sicilian blood oranges has pointed out low penetration indexes, meaning that such products are not yet consumed by all European families besides the fact that demand is very dynamic. Today is possible to vary the demand of Sicilian red oranges significantly, both as fresh products and as juices (refrigerated-fresh, home-made, bar-made, and long-shelf-life ones). We deem that differentiating the product typologies consumed is a great chance to expand consumption, by not forgetting to take into account the quality and typology of services provided. In particular, the healthy characteristics of anthocianines, hydroxycinnamic acids (antioxidants), vitamin C, pectines, etc…

1 As far as the text is concerned, A.S. Zarbà took care of point 1, while G. Pulvirenti took care of point 2.
In conclusion, at worldwide level what general circumstances affect the blood orange market including citrus-fruit and the entire range of agro-food products. The era of product standardization is definitively overcome. Today agro-food market and citrus-fruit one in particular are clearly oriented towards differentiation and segmentation. Consumers more and more focus their attention towards products that are characterized by appellations of origin and quality, preferring those that are grown through biological farming or other environmental-friendly processing, also because of a great consideration of the diet, nutritional and healthy aspects of what they choose.

For this differentiation process to become real it is necessary to provide adequate initiatives to spread information to serve but also to safe-guard final consumers, to improve market transparency and provide more opportunities for Sicilian blood oranges to enter the market worldwide, including tour court food-products. All acquired knowledge has allowed us to point out the limits and opportunities necessary to orient strategies of private investors as well as of politicians, in order to set valid interventions and exalt Sicilian blood oranges.

2. Cited the peculiar characteristics of the oranges blood of the Sicily come above all determined for effect of the thermal excursions that take place between the day and the night in the production areas. Such ranges, which are typical of some well-appreciated Sicilian lands, must be light and should take place in that time of the year when orange fruits grow and become bigger (Spring). They are dangerous for blossoming, setting and the fruits themselves, and in spring they also determine unique environmental conditions, which are typical of Sicily and particularly suitable for red orange growing. In such zones of production of oranges, various have been in the years the tried ones to you to resort to able varieties to realize produced with such characteristics.

The policies promoting varietal changes, that have been carried out for a long time thanks to some National and Regional interventions (Piano agrumi 1° e 2° of EC, Progetto speciale per lo sviluppo dell’agrumicoltura CIFE), have produced slight increases of productions, although with little results. These results have been determined both by the increased surfaces involved and by the yield improvements per unit due to the most sophisticated growing techniques used.

The supply of red oranges produced in Sicily is concentrated in the provinces of Catania and Syracuse, even if small quantities of oranges can be obtained in all the other middle-east provinces (Enna, Ragusa Caltanissetta). Especially in the provinces of Catania and Syracuse, varietal changes have contributed to the most significant increases in orange quantities. Such operations as grubbing, replanting, regrafting and thinning have brought about significant improvements in plantations.

Although a great increase in the productions obtained has been registered, the product exportation seems to be very limited, as it is characterised by minimal volumes with a low percentage. It is not certainly due to the fact that Sicilian products are not appreciated abroad, but to the commercial policies, aiming at promoting home commercial outlets bound to national consumption, and to the difficulty encountered to introduce Sicilian products in foreign markets as exceptional products, characterised by specific and matchless peculiarities.

Exportation growth seems to be stable or slightly declining (Graf. 3). It can be traced back mainly to the growing presence on main markets of citrus fruits coming from other countries (Spain, Greece, Morocco, Turkey). These countries are able to compete thanks to a price policy, which is fostered by their extremely low factor costs.

On the other hand there is no appropriate and effective policy aiming at promoting those productions, even if Sicilian productions have nearly unrivalled qualities. Our country has not done enough in order to develop some organisation models fit for carrying out adequate policies for the product differentiation.

We wanted to analyse the different cultivars of red oranges together with some productions having those characteristics that consumers demand.

In relation to the cited tendencies of market, in the productive phase it is assisted to a greater attention towards the innovations that act on the modalities of management of the due processes also to the insertion of new able products to answer adequately to the preferences expressed from consumers interested to the red oranges. As far as product innovation ways is concerned, we want to underline how important is the modification of the varietal picture, to carry out by introducing new clones, such as red flesh cultivars, early and/or late ripening ones. Important as well is the structural rearrangement of production fields, reducing costs and increasing the mechanization, including organization and processing innovations.

Basilar as well are some innovations involving cultivation on the field, such as the introduction of automated water distribution, mechanized pruning, antifrost system and other programmed treatments (Polyguard).

Not to forget transportation, which has to be renovated taking into consideration all factors in relation to it, such as stocks, processing and market needs. Last but not least the settlement of quality trademarks, geographical indications, production details, specifying whether it is a eco-compatible production or an integrated one, all representing important strategies to distinguish and differentiate products at market level.
REFERENCES