



HEALTHGRAIN

EXPLOITING BIOACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN CEREAL GRAINS FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

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Consumers in European countries appreciate grain healthiness in diverse ways

Increasing the consumption of whole grain products and ensuring the successful introduction of functional cereal based foods requires an understanding of the views of consumers. The HEALTHGRAIN project of the European Union performed two consumer studies, each in four European countries, in order to study consumer expectations of healthy cereal foods, and assess the effect of claims and cues on consumer perception.

Overall whole grain products were seen more positively than refined cereal products in terms of healthiness, naturalness, being nutritionally balanced, filling and offering slow energy release. However, these effects were more pronounced for consumers from Finland but less so for consumers from the UK and Italy.

A second study investigated the impact of health claims on perceptions of healthiness and likelihood of buying cereal products. While consumers generally rated those products with health claims as healthier, this effect was much less pronounced for consumers in Italy. Likewise the health claims had a positive impact on likelihood of buying in Finland, Germany and the UK but a negative impact in Italy.

The results may stimulate food producers to launch whole grain based products and point to the usefulness of health claims. However, claims might need to be targeted differently in different European countries.

The EU Integrated Project HEALTHGRAIN

The HEALTHGRAIN project has substantially strengthened the scientific basis for a new generation of cereal based products with enhanced health benefits. The project also has formed a network of research organizations, industries and organizations communicating to consumers that will continue as the HEALTHGRAIN Forum.

*Results of the project will be presented in
the HEALTHGRAIN Conference on May 5-7 in Lund, Sweden:
www.healthgrain.org*

Food, Consumer Behaviour and Health Research Centre, University of Surrey

The Food, Consumer Behaviour and Health Research Centre at the University of Surrey brings together researchers from psychology, nutrition, food safety and management in order to address issues concerned with food and consumer behaviour.



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Key references:

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