

## Supermarket Trends and the Consumer

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Aase S. Supermarket Trends: How Increased Demand for Healthful Products and Services Will Affect Food and Nutrition Professionals. Practice Applications Beyond the Headlines. J Am Diet Assoc. 2007;107: 1286-1288.

### **How will the consumer be affected by the current supermarket trends?**

The author has reviewed supermarket trends in two studies from the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), a national trade association for supermarkets. Knowledge of the trends discussed in her review will be helpful for those working with consumers to prepare them to effectively navigate through the many products that may be available. Michael Sansolo, a senior vice president at the FMI was credited with this statement: “The average supermarket might carry as many as 45,000 products”.

### **What do consumers expect from supermarkets? How are supermarkets (and manufacturers) responding? What are consumers buying?**

- more health related support (disease prevention education)
- more support for healthy meals (healthier options for ready to eat or easy to prepare items)
- healthier products--less sodium, more whole grains, and more fruit and vegetables
- convenience (quick and easy)

The convenience in the produce department includes precut and packaged produce. Interest in portion control is shown in the popularity of the 100 calorie portion items. More organic foods are being purchased and so are more ethnic foods. Exotic items are also gaining in popularity. Stores may provide more food demonstrations, recipes, and directions for meals. Expect the future to bring more technology in supermarkets.

Note that some stores and brands are creating their own labeling systems and symbols.

The nutrition facts panel of the food label is still an important tool for providing important nutrition information.

### **Implications for Extension**

Implications for Extension are evidenced in all of the trends. Supermarket trends are a reflection of the needs and interests of the consumers.

Even though nutrition education may not be the highest priority of supermarket shoppers, it is a priority and nutrition education can be piggy-backed along with their interests.