Fruits and vegetables at the heart of social inequality in France

Published on 30/01/2014 - Published by Cirad
FruiTrop n°218, Page From 14 to 16
Free

Informations
- Product(s) : Fruits, Vegetables
- Rubrique / Thématique : Direct from the markets
- Country : France

Shop

FruitTrop Magazine n°218
Banana Prices Close-up

Articles from same magazine
- Counter-season table grape
- World table grape market
- Florida Grapefruit

Linked articles
- Organic, not such good compliance …
- 2015-16 Spanish citrus season: severe heatwave.
- European stone fruits: potential revised downward, particularly for the peach and nectarine

While fruits and vegetables are highly prized in the agri-business sector, and form a basic part of the diet of the better-off in France, the more deprived sections reject them on grounds of their price. Indeed the poorest households buy less of them than the richest, which dedicate a major part of their food budget to them, and more particularly to fruits. The management category consumes much more fruits and vegetables than the workers, with a gap of 50 % for fruits and 24 % for vegetables. This approach, based on the job classification terminology used by INSEE [French Institute for National Statistics] may be supplemented by an approach based on revenue differences. The work by INRA [French national Institute for Agricultural Research] based on the 2007 Worldpanel data, relating to the purchases of 2 765 households, also confirmed that there is a significant revenue effect in vegetables consumption: the richest 15 % buy more than 12 kg/UC²/year of vegetables more than the poorest, with the average being 64 kg of vegetables per UC and per year. Social differences in terms of diet appear early and are visible from childhood and adolescence, since they largely result from the family socialisation process. A report by ANSES in December 2012, based on the data from the INCA 2 national study (2006-2007), showed that young people belonging to families from low SPGs consume less fruits and vegetables. The gap in daily fruits and vegetables consumption between extreme socio-economic groups can be as much as 75 g (i.e. approximately one portion). Again, the correlation between revenue level and fruits and vegetables consumption is fairly clear. The higher fruits and vegetables consumption encountered moving up the social or revenue scale, whether in terms of quantity or frequency, has repercussions for adherence to the nutrition recommendations (consume at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day).

Fruit Veggies France p 14

The social differences can be read not only in the types of products consumed. In fact, they also relate to the degree of processing of the products purchased. Whereas processed products (frozen, tinned, ready meals, bagged salads, etc.) were originally the preserve of the higher categories, an INRA study based on the 2007 purchase data from the consumption panel Worldpanel shows that this has no longer been the case for some years. This can be explained by the relative fall in price of industrial products, which have made them accessible to all sections of the population. Currently the proportion of processed products in the vegetables basket is higher in the most modest
households. The proportion of fresh products may be considered as a marker of social position. Hence the study also reveals points about vegetarianism, obesity, organic products and other food products. In conjunction with these findings, according to a British study conducted in more than ten countries, which appeared in the British Medical Journal, researchers found that a healthy diet entailed an overall additional cost of 1.48 USD per day and 1.54 USD per 2000 kcal portion (i.e. approximately 1.10 euro per day), which explains why families with a lower food budget are consuming less and less fruits and vegetables, especially fresh.

For more information:
“A healthy diet incurs an additional cost of 1.1 euro per day,” article on the CEP “Outlook and Evaluation” site dated 16 December 2013, Noémie Schaller