

It's safe and healthy! Increasing consumers' willingness to consume aging produce

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### **Abstract**

Consumers tendency to waste suboptimal food poses challenges for sustainable food systems. In the case of aging produce, consumers often experience a conflict between the goals of not wanting to waste food and food safety. In addition to safety, perceived healthfulness can influence the decision to consume versus dispose (suboptimal) food items. Using an online information experiment on the safety and healthfulness of aging produce, this study investigates consumers' willingness to consume aging produce. Results show that providing information on safety or healthfulness and the resulting safety and health perception increase willingness to consume aging produce. In addition, consumers with a lower food disgust sensitivity, lower food waste propensity and a consumer decision style with less reliance in expiration dates are more willing to consume aging produce.

**Keywords:** *Suboptimal Food; Aging Produce; Consumer Choice*

**Track:** Transformative Consumer Research