

## More than one way to define quality

Think about a top-quality tomato. Is it red or green or in between? Big or small? What is the variety?

There are **no definitive answers**. Different consumers have different definitions of quality.

When consumers have a choice, they **choose to buy the produce that best matches their desires** — their own idea of quality.

## Why is it important?

**IF** you *understand* what consumers want and demand...



**THEN**, you can *produce* what they want and demand: exactly the right color, size, variety, and quantity, at the right place and the right time. You will **sell your produce** more easily, more quickly, and at a **better price**.



Millennium Challenge Account  
Cape Verde



Ministry of the Environment,  
Rural Development and  
Marine Resources



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## Knowing Your Consumers



Consumers eating your produce. Do they like it? Will they buy more?

ONE IN A SERIES OF 5

Market

[www.mca.cv/pt/formacao/documentos-formacao/](http://www.mca.cv/pt/formacao/documentos-formacao/)

## Who are your consumers?

A **consumer** is anyone who buys your product. If they also eat your product, they are known as the **final consumer**.

Farmers often don't meet final consumers. Farmers sell their product to intermediaries, who resell it to the final consumer or other intermediaries.

If you don't know your consumers, it is difficult to understand and to produce what they want and demand.

Find, meet, and **learn about all your consumers**, so you understand what they want and demand. Contact:

- intermediaries
- businesses (stores, restaurants, hotels, etc.)
- institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons, etc.)
- final consumers (the people who actually eat your produce)

**Discuss** what you have to offer **with the people who make decisions** about buying your produce.

## Build a relationship

**Build a relationship** with each consumer you find. Learn about their demands. If they are not the final consumer, learn about the demands of the people who buy from them.

Your goal is to provide them with the quality products they want and demand, so that they **increase their business** and **buy more from you**. How?

1. **Initial interview.** Ask questions. Take time to understand their business and what their customers desire.
2. **Stay in contact.** Communicate regularly to understand what is going well and how you can improve your services.

## Defining quality

As you discuss quality with each new consumer, **look for trends**. Which characteristics are most important for your consumer:

- size?
- shelf life?
- nutritional value?
- shape?
- flavor?
- firmness?
- color?

## What else does the consumer demand?

Consumers demand more than just quality. You need to understand:

- what quantity they want
- how often they will buy
- what type of packaging and presentation they expect

Try various questions to gather this information. For example, you may ask your consumers:

- What is more important, the color or size of tomatoes?
- Would you pay more for well-packaged products?
- Do you have complaints about bruised bananas?

Once you understand what consumers want and demand, **modify your operations** accordingly. Then **check your results**. Ask your consumers if they have increased sales and fewer losses. Make adjustments as necessary.

You will earn the **loyalty** of existing consumers, and your good **reputation** will help you find new ones.