

# New methodologies to study the effect of expectations on consumers' perceptions of sustainable food products

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## STATE OF ART

**Expectations** generated from sustainability information can drive consumer **food choices and preferences**. The disconfirmation or confirmation of consumer expectations for sustainable food products can determine their success or failure (Cardello, 2007). By assessing consumers' **individual differences and attitudes**, it is possible to get complete and more accurate insights into the performance of sustainable food products. However, the current **methodologies** and approaches used to study consumer expectations are time-consuming and costly, making them less likely to be adopted by companies.

## OBJECTIVES

This thesis aims at improving the current methodologies to study the effect of expectations on food product experience by advancing the following research objectives:

- 1) Improving existing methods for measuring consumer expectations and their effect on food product experience.
- 2) Using new approaches to assess individual differences in consumer attitudes and expectations towards sustainability information
- 3) Optimizing the performance of sustainable food products by studying expectations.

### STUDY 1 (DURING THE 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR OF THE PHD)

**OBJECTIVE:** Validation of Text Highlighting method to segment consumer for their attitudes and expectations.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 118 consumers

**RESULTS:** The text highlighting method successfully segmented consumers based on attitudes and expectations.

## ACTIVITIES

**Table 1** Gantt diagram for this Ph.D. thesis project (2nd and 3rd year)

Activity / Months	II year												III year											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>A1)</b> Data Collection study 2	█	█	█	█																				
Data Collection study 3					█	█	█	█																
<b>A2)</b> Statistical Data analysis					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█									
<b>A3)</b> Period Abroad																	█	█	█					
<b>A4)</b> Thesis and Paper Preparation	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

## DATA COLLECTION

### STUDY 2

**OBJECTIVE:** Study the relationship between consumer expectations and both implicit and explicit attitudes toward new sustainability labels.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 300

**EXPECTED RESULTS:** Gain insights into how individual differences, such as personality traits and attitudes, influence expectations for sustainability labels and product experience.

### STUDY 3

**OBJECTIVE:** Improve the current method of measuring consumer expectations.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 300

**EXPECTED RESULTS:** Validation of a new, more efficient and cost-effective method for studying consumer expectations.

## PERIOD ABROAD (University of Nottingham, UK)

### OBJECTIVES:

Make international links with other research groups.

### EXPECTED RESULTS:

Expand and enrich the research and the Ph.D. project.

## STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS

Apply multivariate methods to analyze the collected data, focusing on optimizing the performance of sustainable food products by examining consumer expectations.

**EXPECTED RESULTS:** Measure the effect of expectations on sensory properties, emotions, and context. Identify consumer groups by attitudes and individual differences. Develop a global product index based on expectations.

## THESIS AND PAPER PREPARATION

### OBJECTIVES:

Writing Ph.D. thesis and scientific papers; poster and oral communications at scientific conferences.

### EXPECTED RESULTS:

Scientific Dissemination.