

MARKET TRENDS AND CONSUMER PREFERENCES IN RELATION TO COLOR AND FRAGRANCE OF SPRAY CARNATIONS

**D. Rymon, N. Umiel, R. Nakar
Agricultural Research Organization, Volcani Center, Bet Dagan, ISRAEL
and G. Fishelson
Tel-Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Tel-Aviv, ISRAEL**

Knowing past trends of an industry, of a product, etc., is important in planning new economic activities. At the introductory stages of marketing a product, the observed prices and quantities result from the relative importance of supply side activities; afterwards, during the period of maturity, the market determines the equilibrium quantity and price from which consumers' preferences can be inferred.

This study is aimed at identifying and quantifying the trends of two market-determined variables, quantity sold and wholesale price, and of two product's features, the flower's color and its fragrance intensity. In a previous marketing research, consumers declared these two to be among the most important five flower characteristics. The nature of the present study is a 'partial' analysis, since it refers to each

feature separately. This study used annual data from the Aalsmeer Flower Auction (VBA), (the world's biggest flower auction), on all the cultivars of Spray carnation for the period 1973 to 1986. The quantities on the market are ever increasing at an impressive annual rate. The trends found for the prices are of two types: the nominal prices, as determined in Dfl., are stable throughout the 14 year period; but the real prices tended to decrease annually by 5.7% when expressed in Dfl., and by 8.3% when in US\$. The difference demonstrates the relative disadvantage of a foreign developer.

Among the various colors offered by the breeders there is a clear change of preferences toward the bright colors (white, yellow and orange), and away from the 'reds'.

The result of the partial analysis related to the flower's smell, show that the last decade began with an increase in sales of cultivars with a slight or no fragrance, but that recently the medium-fragrance cultivars seem to have gained a stronger market position.