



Drivers of Consumer Perception of Food Safety

Hortgro Technical Symposium

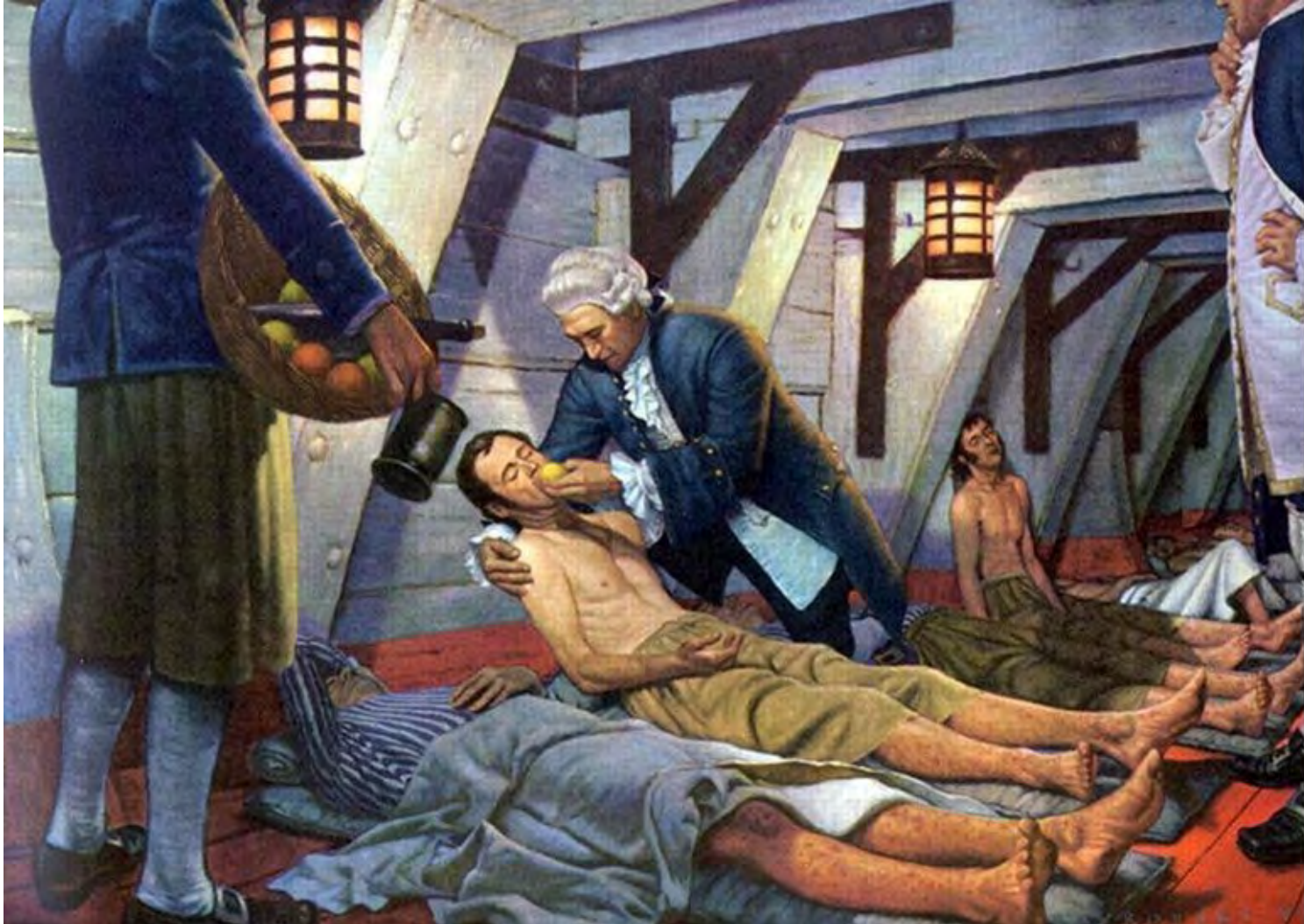
03 June 2024



Overview

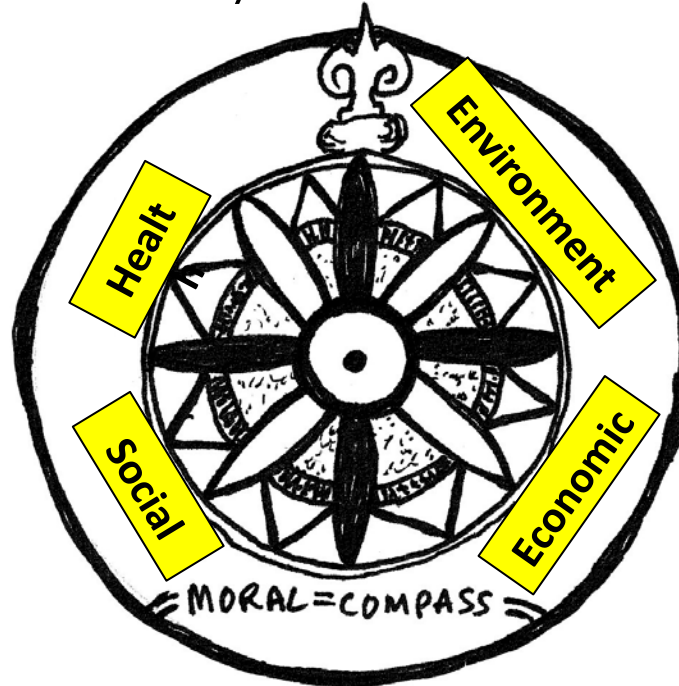
- Trade-offs
- Uncertainty of the unknown
- The role of food labels and trade marks
- The influence of media
- Trust in government officials
- Final thoughts

A long time ago



Trade-Offs

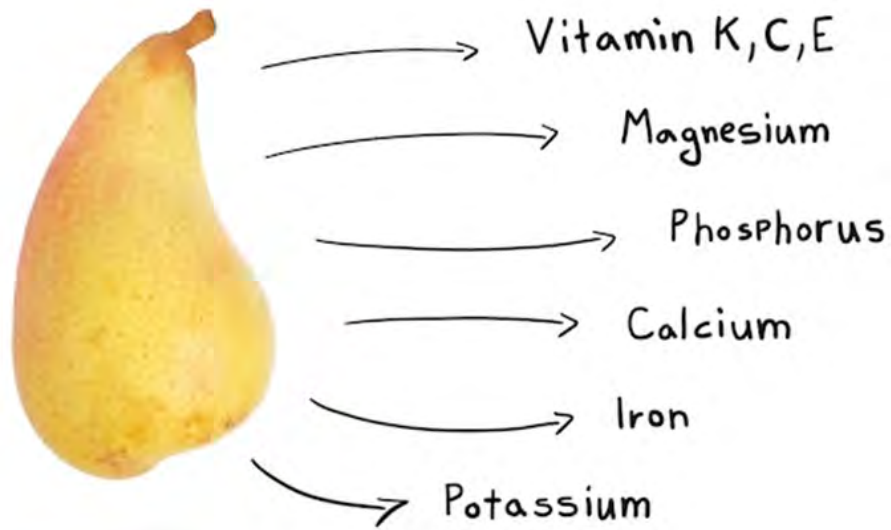
- Scepticism of plant protection products may lead to unhealthy decision making such as avoiding fruits and vegetables.
- Risk perception of EU consumers does not reflect the reality.
- Swiss and Greece survey as a case study.



Uncertainty of the unknown

- Chemophobia
- Safe food does not mean residue-free food.
- Pressure on policy makers may lead to non-scientific decision-making.
- Higher acceptability of well-known technology.

Uncertainty of the unknown



Ingredients list: Hydroxycinnamic acids, procyanidins, hydroxybenzoic acids, flavan-3-ols, flavonols, alcohols, esters, acetals.

The role of food labels and trade marks

- Food safety is directly linked with destination of origin or organic products.



EU Official Food Designations



The influence of media

- Creates a heightened consumer perception of risk.
- Tweets in the USA showed the general public largely skewed toward negative sentiments around pesticides.
- Misinformation (actual risks vs low risk).
 - Microbial pathogens vs preservatives - Turkish case study.
- Albanian tomato production declined inline with increased negative publicity.

Benefits of Plant Protection Products – rarely discussed in media

- It makes our lives better provided they are regulated and used in such a way that the benefits significantly outweigh the risks.
- Key role in reducing food waste and help alleviate malnutrition.
- By 2050, we will have to produce 60% more food to feed everyone.
- The current crop loss is ~40% and can easily double without the use of plant protection products.



Benefits of Plant Protection Products – rarely discussed in media

- UN SDG No.2: **Zero Hunger**.
- ~735 million people faced hunger in 2022 (122 million more compared to 2019).
 - Universal access to safe and nutritious food
 - End all forms of malnutrition
 - Double the productivity and income of small-scale producers
 - Sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices
 - Ensure stable food commodity markets



Trust in government officials

- Understanding how food safety is implemented and monitored by officials.
- Credible information across cultures.
- Retailer food safety requirements beyond legislation, implying science is not trustworthy.
- Science has become politicized - a dangerous development.
 - Glyphosate debate



Final thoughts

- We know more about food safety than ever before.
- Misinformation may lead to unhealthy eating patterns.
- Reputable information is important - Dilution of fake news
 - From official food safety authorities
 - Stronger connection between journalists and scientist
- Building trust
- **World Hunger Day** – 28 May; **World Food Safety Day** – 07 June
- Thank you for your attention!



References

1. Bhatt, A. Evolution of Clinical Research: A History Before and Beyond James Lind. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*. 2010 Jan-Mar; 1(1): 6–10.
2. Episode 17 - A life leading on food safety. Bernhard Url, Executive Director of EFSA. URL: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/podcast/episode-17-life-leading-food-safety>.
3. Glyphosate: no critical areas of concern; data gaps identified. EFSA 6 June 2023. URL: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/glyphosate-no-critical-areas-concern-data-gaps-identified#:~:text=assessment%20of%20glyphosate%20and%20concluded,EU%20risk%20assessment%20on%20glyphosate>.
4. Harvey, R.R., Zakhour, C. M. & Gould, L.H. (2016). Foodborne Disease Outbreaks Associated with Organic Foods in the United States. *Journal of Food Protection*, 79, 11, 1953-1958.
5. He, W. et al., Chemical Composition of Juices Made from Cultivars and Breeding Selections of European Pear (*Pyrus communis* L.). *J Agric Food Chem*. 2022 Apr 27;70(16):5137-5150.
6. Jaskiewicz, K, Taylor, O, Senior, B, and Maestre, M 2023. Communication of food-related health risks and benefits – a systematic review (2018-2022). EFSA supporting publication 2023:EN-8203. 49 pp. doi:10.2903/sp.efsa.2023.EN-8203.
7. Jun, I. et al., 2023. Evaluating the perceptions of pesticide use, safety, and regulation and identifying common pesticide-related topics on Twitter. *Integrated Environmental Assessment and Management* — Volume 19, Number 6—pp. 1581–1599.
8. Saleh, R., Bearth, A. & Siegrist, M. How chemophobia affects public acceptance of pesticide use and biotechnology in agriculture. *Food Quality and Preference* 91 (2021) 104197.
9. Simoglou K. B. and Roditakis E. Consumers' Benefit—Risk Perception on Pesticides and Food Safety—A Survey in Greece. *Agriculture* 2022, 12, 192.
10. UN Nations Global Perspective Human Stories. Hunger Affects one in ten globally, UN report finds. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1138612>.





Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa

Reg. No. 2000/010147/08

Unit 7, 22 on Main, 22 Old Main Road, Gillitts, 3610

PO Box 461, Hillcrest 3650, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

† +27 31 765 2514 | e info@cga.co.za | www.cga.co.za

