



Nutritional and environmental information: results from a choice-experiment

Emily Bouwman, Harriëtte Snoek
& Muriel Verain
Wageningen Economic Research





EU-project: SUSFANS

Overall aim of SUSFANS

To strengthen sustainable food and nutrition security in Europe, by advising food policy makers regarding healthy and sustainable food production and consumption

Aim current research

To gain insight in how to communicate about **sustainability** and **health** on fruit and vegetable products with a choice-experiment



- Product information via labels influences:
 - Product perceptions
 - Repurchasing intentions (Samant & Seo, 2016)
- Which aspects of information influence consumers?
 - Combination health & sustainability (Verain et al., 2016)
 - Specificity (construal level theory; Liberman & Trope, 1998)
 - Number (Grunert & Wills, 2007)
- Trade-off with price
 - An interest in price leads to less label use (Grunert & Wills, 2007)



Method Choice-experiment

4 products:

- Fresh vegetables & fresh fruit
- Frozen vegetables & frozen fruit

Information on the products

- Content of information
 - Health
 - Sustainability
 - Both
- Level of specificity
 - Specific
 - Medium
 - General
- Use and type of number
 - Percentage
 - Grade
 - No number
- Price
 - Low
 - Medium
 - High



Material Choice-experiment

Fresh Fruit



Frozen Fruit



Fresh Vegetables



Frozen Vegetables



These materials were all tested in a pilot



Claims: Content & specificity

	Sustainable	Health	Combi
General	Sustainable product	Healthy product	Sustainable & healthy product
Medium	Environmentally friendly Ethically responsible Economically responsible	Contains nutrients Contains minerals Contains vitamins	Contains nutrients Contains minerals Contains vitamins & Environmentally friendly Ethically responsible Economically responsible
Specific	Reduced CO2 emissions Ethical working conditions Fair trade	Contains vitamin C Contains potassium Contains fibre	Contains vitamin C Contains potassium Contains fibre & Reduced CO2 emissions Ethical working conditions Fair trade



Example of the French claims used in the choice-experiment

Sustainable

Health

Combi

General



Medium



Specific



These materials were tested in a pilot





Number & price

Number

- Percentage
 - Meets 80% of the requirements for sustainable / healthy food
- Grade
 - Scores 8 out of 10 on the requirements for sustainable / healthy food
- No number
 - Meets most of the requirements for sustainable / healthy food

Price

- Low
 - Medium
 - High
- à Based on average price of the product and WTP (pilot)
- à Difference between medium and low & high is 2.5%



Method choice-experiment

- N=1483
 - Netherlands (N=494); Czech Republic (N=493); France (N=496)
- Representative sample in terms of age, gender, education, income and rural living area
- Winter 2017
- The respondents were divided into four groups
 - Frozen fruits, fresh fruits, frozen vegetables, fresh vegetables
- Choice experiment
 - Forced choice
 - Orthogonal design (9 choice sets)

Example choice set

- 9 sets of choices
- two choice options

“Imagine shopping at a store and looking for a fresh fruit box, which of these two options would you choose?”

Stel u zich voor dat u in de winkel op zoek bent naar een doosje vers fruit, welke van deze twee opties zou u kopen?

Product 1

Claim (points to 'Werk Fruit Box')

Number (points to 'Voldoet aan het merendeel van de eisen voor gezonde voeding')

Price (points to 'Prijs: € 4,34')

Content & Specificity (points to 'Rijk aan vezels, Rijk aan vitamine C, Rijk aan kalium')

Product 2

Claim (points to 'Vierde Fruit Box')

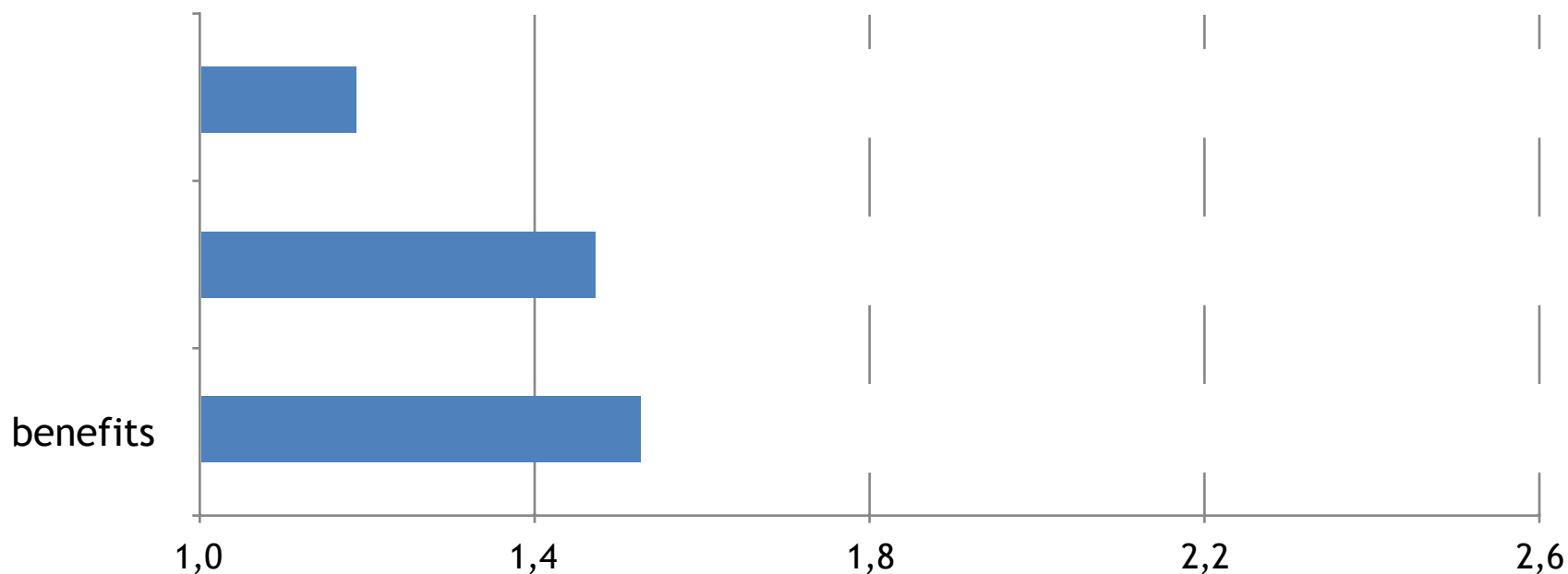
Number (points to 'Scoret 8 op 10 voor de eisen voor duurzame voeding')

Price (points to 'Prijs: € 4,25')

Content & Specificity (points to 'Milieuvriendelijk, Ethisch verantwoord, Economisch verantwoord')

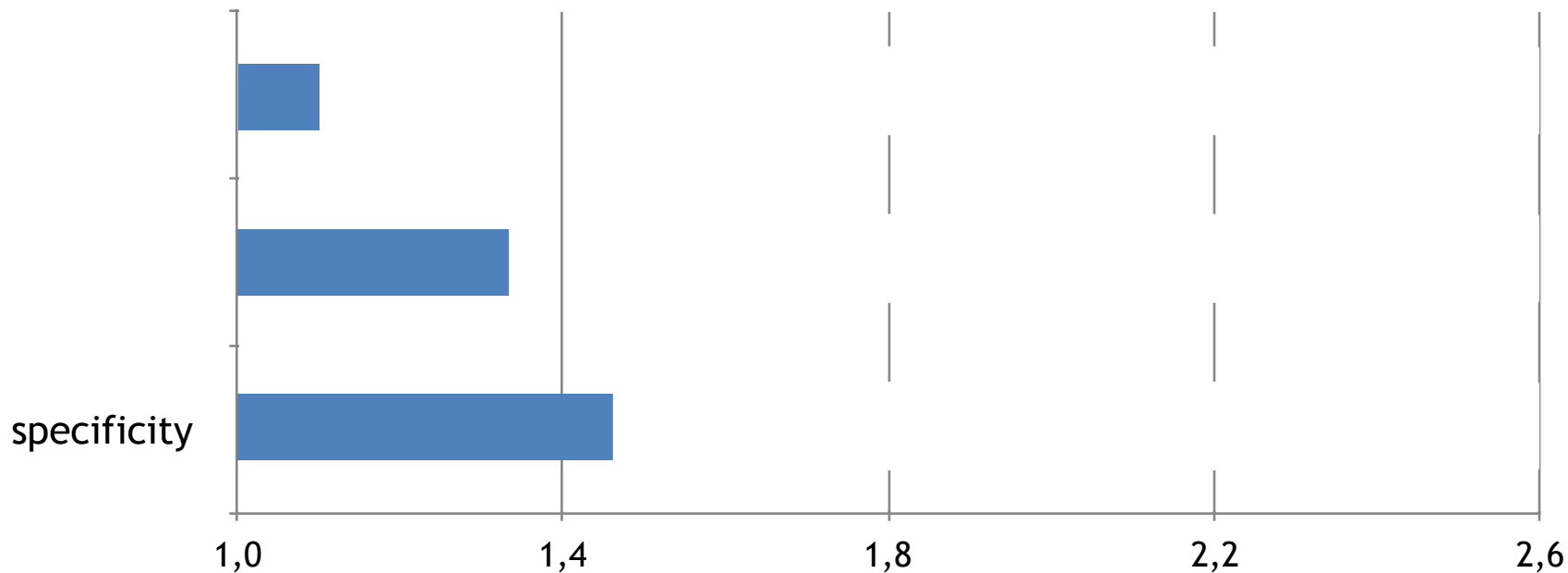
Buttons:

Results: content of information



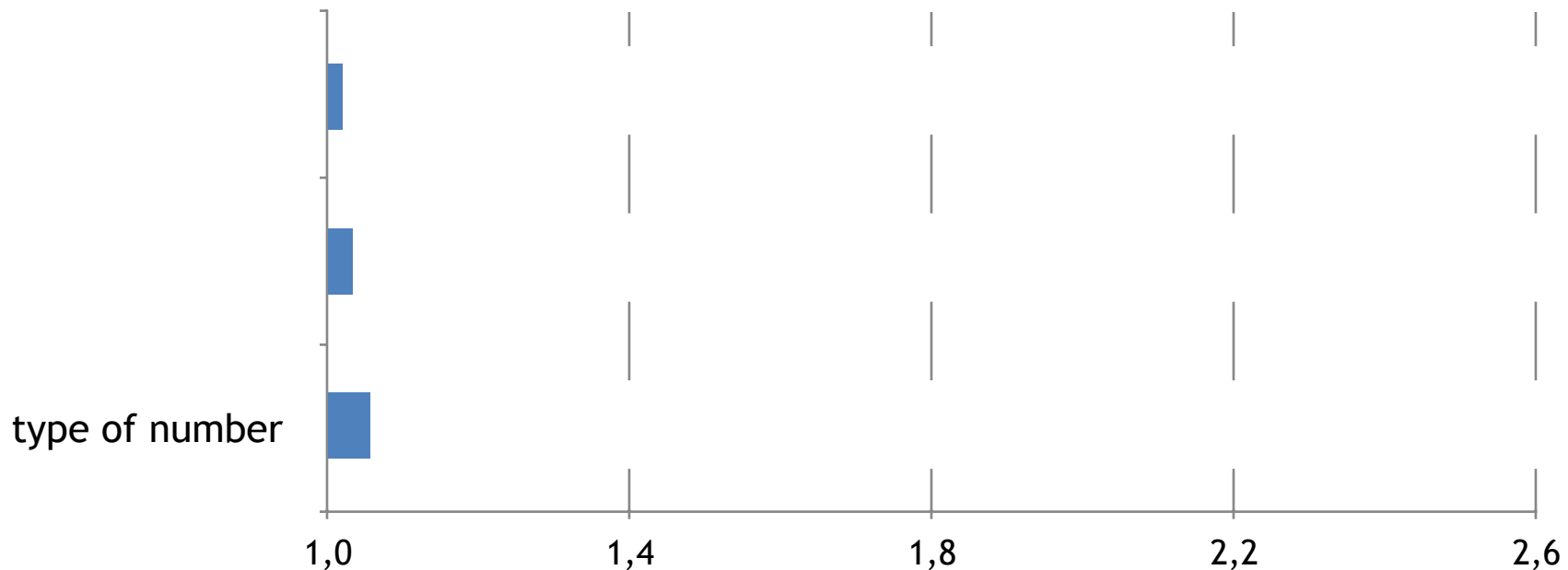
- Consumers prefer health information over sustainable information
- Consumers prefer both over only health or only sustainable

Results: specificity



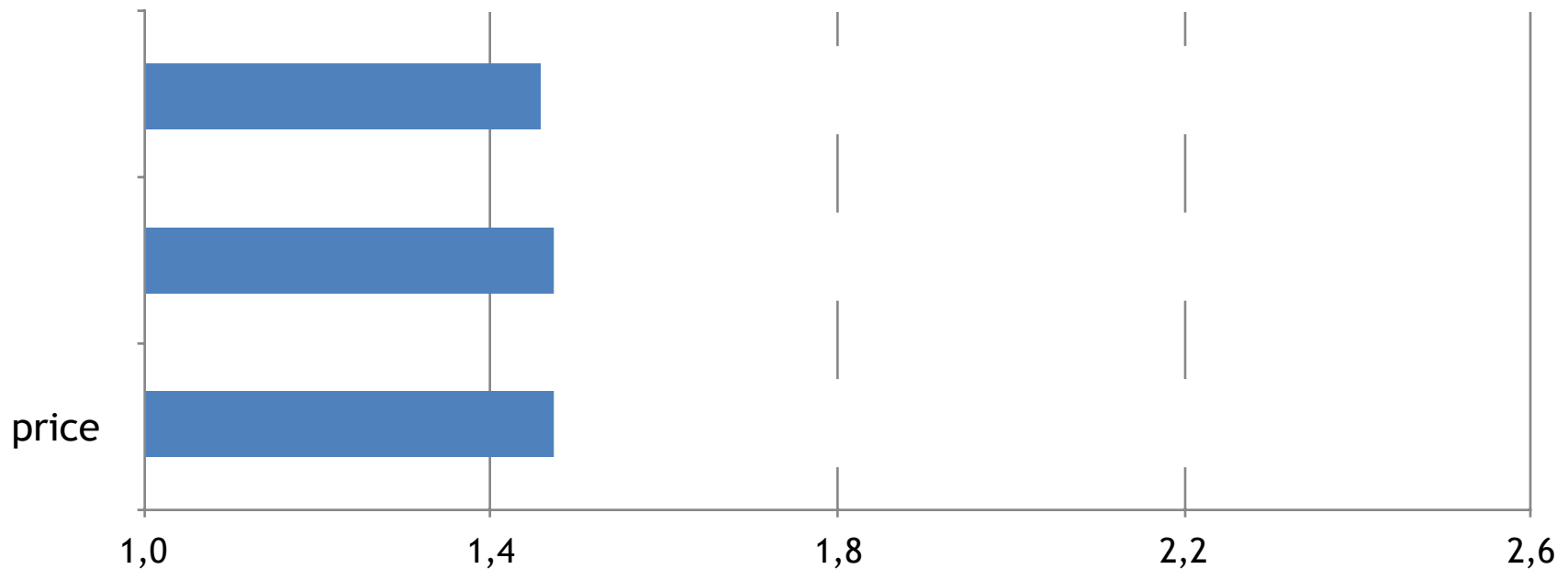
- Consumers prefer more specific information

Results: number



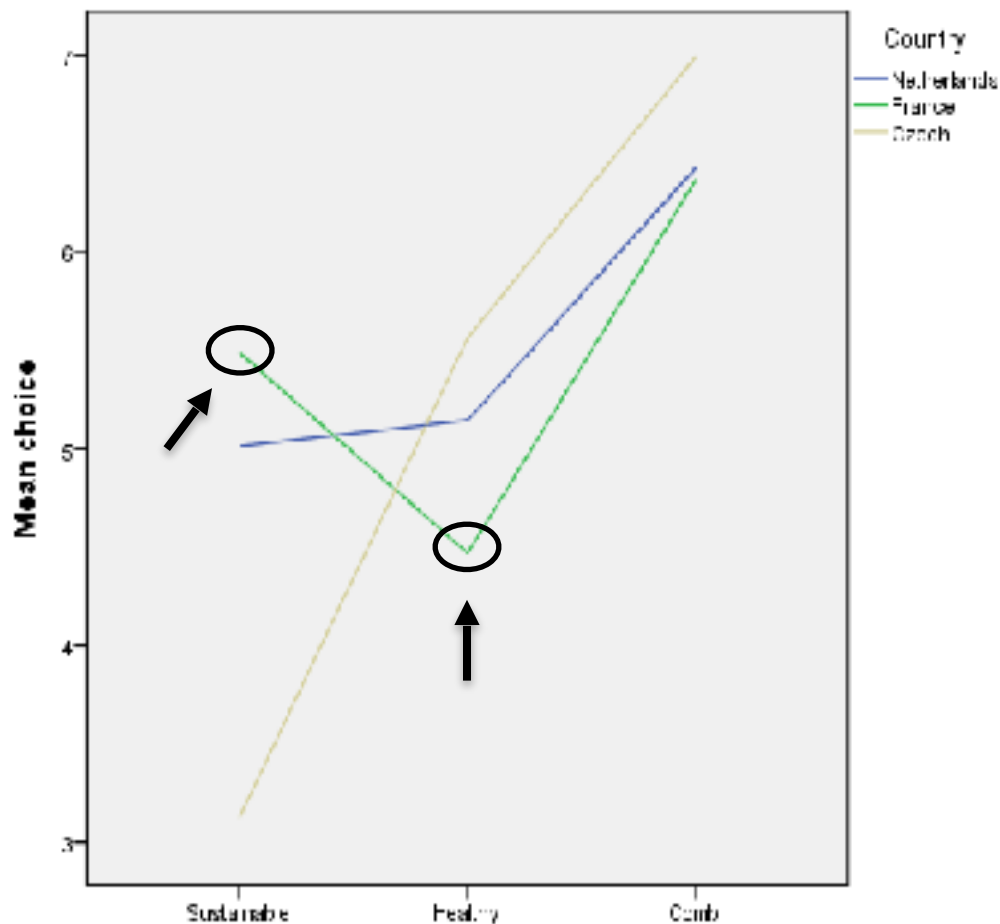
- A grade slightly influenced product choice more than no information
- A grade did not differ from adding a percentage
- Adding a percentage also did not differ from adding no information.

Results: price



- The lower the price the better
- Price had the largest effect in our design

- For all countries, for all products, for all people (age, gender, education)
- **Exception:** For the French sustainable information influences their choice more than health information



Strengths

- Choice experiment (lower social desirability; Auger & Devinney, 2007)
- Large sample in three different countries
- Materials were piloted

Limitations

- Hypothetical choices
- Results depend on trade-offs
- Specific information is also more information

Take home messages

- Price was the largest indicator of choice
- Product information on both health and sustainability influences choice more than only health or sustainability
- More specific information influences product choice more than general information
- Framing of numbers have little or no effect on product choice





Thanks for your attention!

