

Major Trends Observed in the Apple Industry

By Lee Jackson

Apple growers and processors are continually alert to the demands of consumers. Various marketing strategies have evolved to better meet the changes in the marketplace. Among the most observable trends are:

- Orchards and grocers have a larger variety of apples for sale. Compared to the 3 or 4 varieties carried in years past, more stores are now carrying 10 to 15 varieties of apples. Many consumers are seeing and enjoying varieties beyond the Delicious and Jonathans for the first time.
- Apple orchards are a source of family entertainment. No longer do orchards feature only apples. Many provide such fun activities as pony rides, hay wagon rides, scarecrow contests, pie baking contests, and others.
- Orchards sell many related products. Tubs of colorful mums and other flowers are for sale at many orchards. Others specialize in fresh baked pies, cakes, and breads. Apple related products such as apple cookbooks, apple peelers, and other apple collectibles sell well at orchards.

- There is an emphasis on “natural” products. More non-sugar and natural food products are available at apple stands and orchards. Apple jellies are made without sugar or artificial pectin.
- Health and nutrition influences increase purchases of fresh produce. Consumers continue to be health conscious and look to fruit as an important aid to good health.
- Restaurants use more produce in their menus. Customers demand for greater variety prompts restaurants to add to their selections.
- Quality of apples in selling and marketing is important. “How do the apples look?” Is the first concern of customers. Then, if color and appearance are desirable, they consider price and make their decision.
- More dwarf varieties of apples, along with more disease resistant varieties, are being grown. Small trees that produce fine quality fruit are an important consideration for commercial as well as home orchardists.
- There is a strong movement to rescue the old favorite apple varieties from extinction. Among the old varieties are Baldwin, Wealthy, Northwestern Greening, Newtown Pippin, Beitingheimer, Esopus Spitzenburg, Cox’s Orange Pippin, Fameuse, and others.

These trends have been observed from the research for the apple cookbook, **From the apple Orchard - Recipes for Apple Lovers** (\$13.95) by Lee Jackson for this new and expanded edition. She can be contacted at Lee@imagesunlimitedpub.com Apple cookbooks can be ordered through bookstores or from the publisher: Images Unlimited Publishing, P.O. Box 305 Dept. CP, Maryville, MO 64468 or online at www.imagesunlimitedpub.com