



Research demonstrates: nudging at the supermarket stimulates fruit and vegetable sales

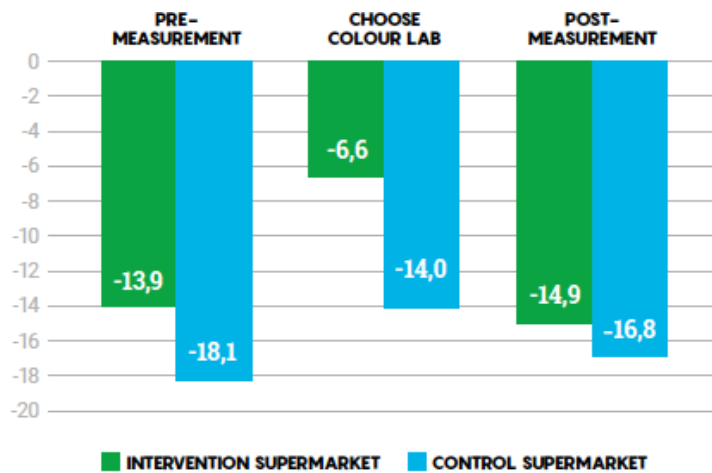
NAGF has retailers entice consumers to making healthier dietary decisions

The Dutch are lagging behind in terms of their fruit and vegetable consumption. The Nationaal Actieplan Groenten en Fruit (NAGF) [National Action Plan Fruit and Vegetables] aims to increase fruit and vegetable intake among the general population and kicked off a unique experiment late 2018 to explore the potential of nudging at the supermarket. They demonstrated that consumers can be enticed to buy more fruit and vegetables with a few simple nudges. The report that was published today offers all supermarkets concrete guidance for them to get started, and is intended to help achieve the objectives of the Nationaal Preventieakkoord [National Prevention Agreement].

The experiment involved converting the Dirk supermarket in Leidschenveen into a 'Ga Voor Kleur Lab' [Choose Colour Lab] for a period of six weeks. Some minor changes were implemented to improve the positioning of fruit and vegetables in the store. It is the first time that such a large number of different nudges was tested at a supermarket in the Netherlands, totalling seven types including access gates, shopping cart inlays and a healthy snack offering at the cash register. The changes in sales figures were compared to a nudge-free controlled supermarket.

Positive results

The results are positive: although both supermarkets sold less fruit and vegetables in 2018 than they had in 2017, the decrease measured in the intervention supermarket during the Ga Voor Kleur Lab campaign was 6.6 percent as opposed to 14.0 percent in the controlled supermarket*. In addition, the study shows that individual nudges fail to produce a significant effect; a combination of nudges is required in order to stimulate purchasing behaviour at the supermarket. The results offer useful insights into the effects of various nudging strategies when combined, and they provide a good example for supermarkets that want to stimulate consumers to start buying more fruit and vegetables.



The average percentage decrease in fresh fruit and vegetable sales in kilograms per 100 transactions relative to 2017.

Figure 1. The average percentage decrease in fresh fruit and vegetable sales in kilograms per 100 transactions in the pre-measurement (week 34 through week 39), during the 'Choose Colour Lab' (week 40 through week 45) and in the post-measurement (week 46 through week 51) in the control and intervention supermarket.

* To what extent the revenue decrease in these branches (somewhat) matches or shows an opposite effect compared to the national average, was not investigated in this study.

Getting started together

Acting on the successful experiment, NAGF is now calling on other supermarkets to get started and implement nudging in order to stimulate fruit and vegetable sales for an extended period of time. “Consumers need a little nudge to make healthy decisions. If all supermarkets join, a lot of gains can be made on a national level”, says Jaap Seidell, Food and Health professor at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

About Ga Voor Kleur Lab

A team of researchers from Vrije Universiteit (VU), Utrecht University (UU), Het Voedingscentrum and Academisch Medisch Centrum (AMC) performed the experimental study. Ga Voor Kleur Lab is part of the Ga Voor Kleur campaign, an initiative by the Nationaal Actieplan Groenten en Fruit (NAGF) in collaboration with Food Cabinet: the campaign agency for food-related issues. Ga Voor Kleur is dedicated to causing a considerable increase in fruit and vegetable consumption in the Netherlands.

What is nudging?

Nudging is to give a subtle push in the right direction. It is a simple way of changing behaviour without damaging the consumer’s freedom of choice. Nudging primarily focuses on automatic and subconscious decision-making behaviour.

Press release



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Healthier Holland

Just one in ten Dutchmen complies with the daily amount of 250 grams of fruit and 250 grams of vegetables as recommended by the Voedingscentrum. Consuming enough fruit and vegetables can help prevent obesity, chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and certain types of cancer. Supermarkets have concluded the Nationaal Preventieakkoord [National Prevention Agreement], committing to aim for annual consumption growth of products in the 'Schijf van Vijf' [the Dutch healthy plate model], including fruit and vegetables, and to entice consumers to buy these products.

Download the full research publication here: www.nagf.nl/gavoorkleurlab

About Nationaal Actieplan Groenten & Fruit (NAGF)

In order to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption in the Netherlands, the Nationaal Actieplan Groenten en Fruit (NAGF) [National Action Plan Fruit and Vegetables] was launched in 2017. NAGF is a collaboration between government, business and social organisations that bundles and strengthens existing initiatives. Together, we commit to more fruit and vegetable intake for the entire country.

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