

Freshness from the consumer's point of view

DANISH ENZYME MANUFACTURER NOVOZYMES A/S HAS CONDUCTED A CONSUMER SURVEY IN FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. THE TOPIC? FRESHNESS OF PACKAGED BREAD!

+ How do consumers in Western Europe define freshness? When do they feel it is time to buy fresh bread? How do they store bread at home? All these questions and more were asked and a total of 1,409 consumers aged between 18 and 65, responsible for buying bread for the household and purchasing bread at least once or twice a month, replied. 300 of these consumers were from France, 400 from Germany, 309 from Sweden and 400 from the UK.

There are only marginal differences between the nations regarding the general opinion of how to define 'freshness'. Softness, mouthfeel and taste are the most important parameters in all four countries which the consumer associates with fresh bread.

However, the order varies. In France and the UK, softness is on the top of the list while in Germany and Sweden the taste is the number one criterion. The moistness of the bread is more important in Germany than the texture and the mouthfeel. This aspect does not play any role in France. In Sweden, moistness and elasticity of the bread are almost of equal importance amongst the most important parameters for freshness.

Purchasing habits and frequencies also reflect the storage behavior of the consumers. Toast bread is the products among all packaged breads that is most often purchased

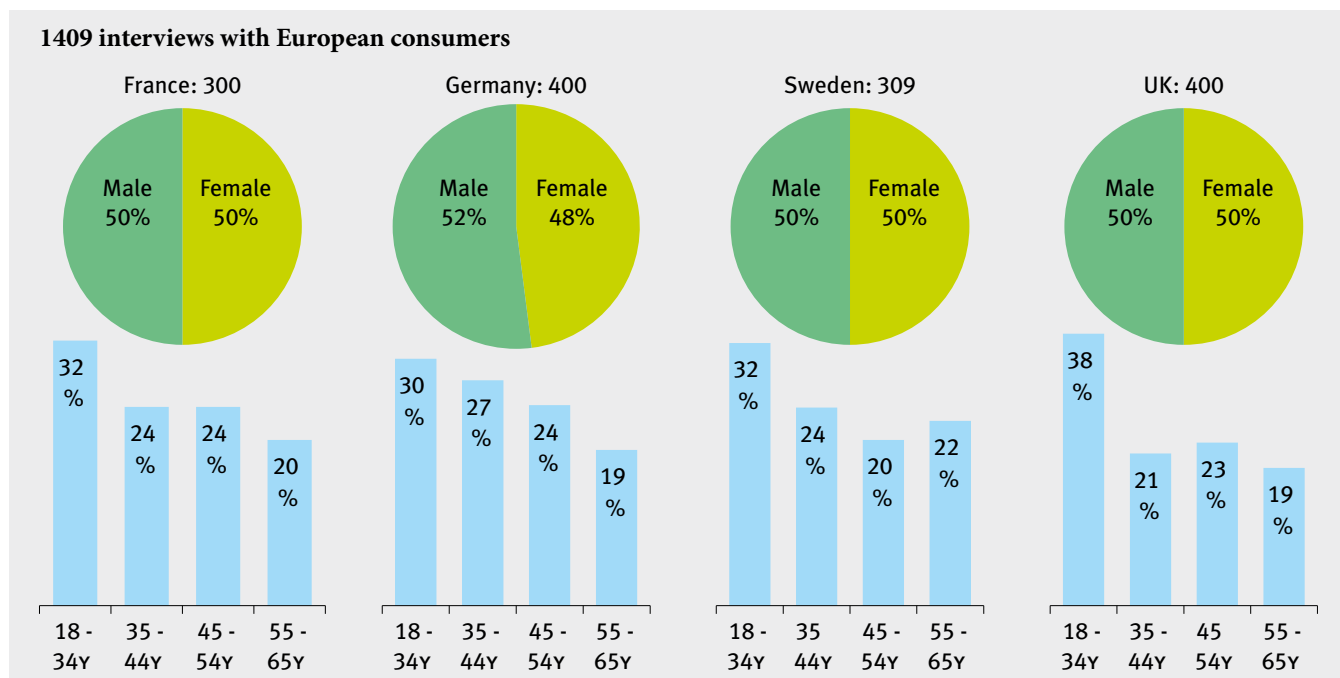
Pål M. Ladsten Regional Marketing Manager:



"We have conducted these consumer surveys to increase our understanding of the end users' needs and the things they care about. The findings have provided us with a tremendous insight that we will use in cooperation with our bread improver customers". +++

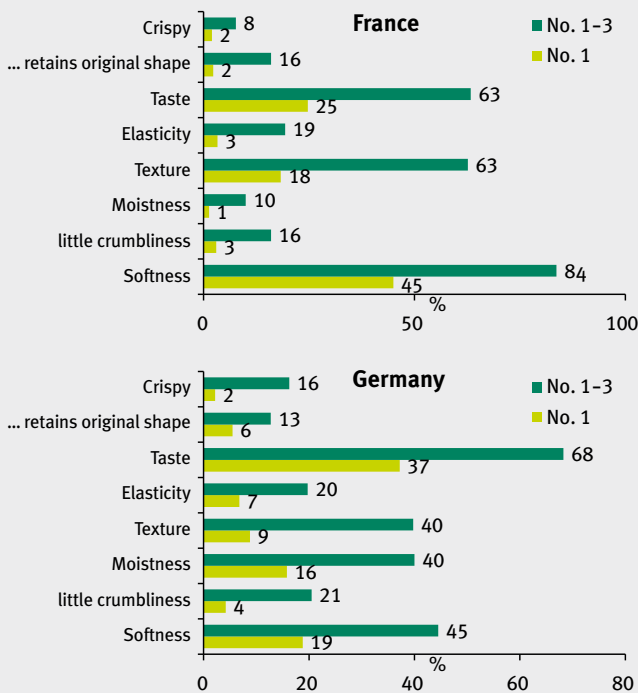
fresh, at least in the UK, in France and Germany, but not in Sweden. Whole grain bread is the second most purchased bread. (It must be considered, however, that the purchasing frequency was questioned, not the volume).

In terms of storage, long established habits become noticeable. The time when fresh baguettes were purchased for each meal left its mark. 32% of the French keep their bread on the kitchen table but only 17% of the Germans, 16% of the Swedish and just 10% of the British consumers. On the other hand, the purchasing habits in Sweden are quite different which explains why these consumers are used to keeping their bread in the freezer. By the way, people aged between 18-44 tend to store their bread more often on the kitchen table than older consumers (45-65).



Source: Novozymes

Definition of freshness



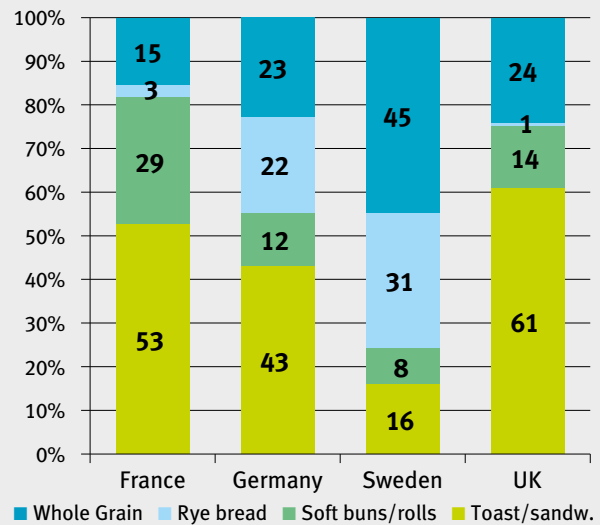
Source: Novozymes

French consumers – even though they keep their bread on the kitchen table – do not throw away as much as the consumers in the other three countries. 74% of the French consumers even claimed not to throw away any bread. In Germany only 47% of the consumers say the same, in Sweden it is 46% and only 38% in the UK.

It might be because they are used to keeping their bread in the freezer that the Swedish consumers do not wish that the shelf life of bread be extended. This is most asked for in Germany for all the four types of packaged bread products surveyed. In France and the UK, it is mainly the women who would appreciate an extended shelf life and considering both genders the younger people desire this more than the older ones.

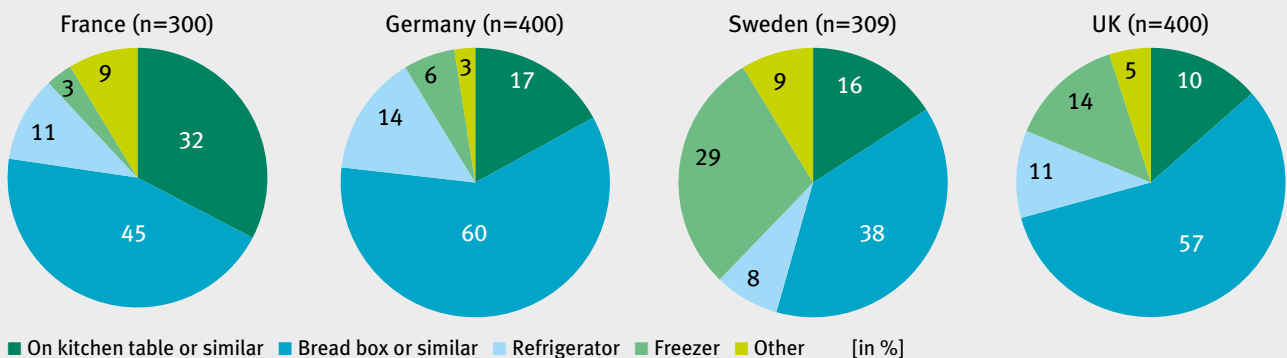
Prolonging the shelf life of bread can be achieved in several ways. The enzyme manufacturer Novozymes is, of course, interested in learning more about the consumers' reaction ▶

How often does your household buy the following types of bread? Packaged ... from supermarkets, etc?



Source: Novozymes

How do you keep the packaged bread in your house?



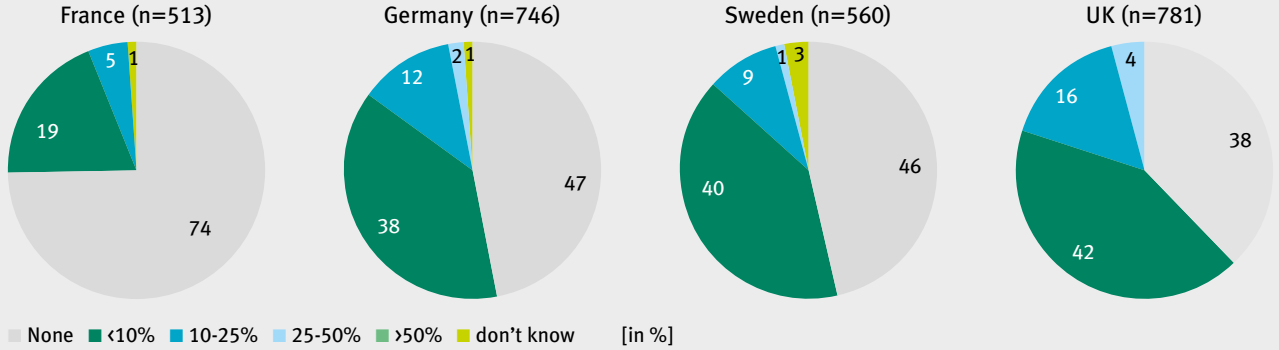
Source: Novozymes

to additives which have to be labeled with an E-number. The result is that only a quarter of the consumers claimed not to be afraid of E-numbers on the label with consumers above

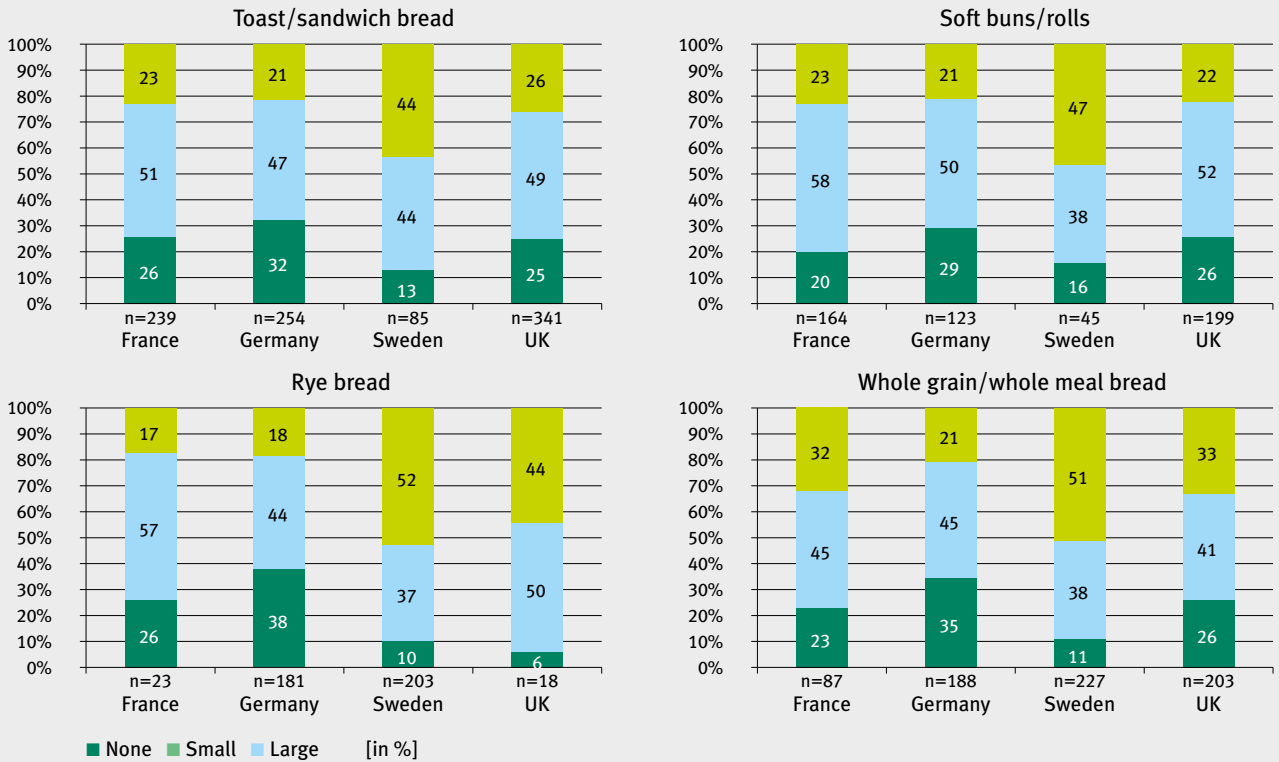
the age of 35 having a clear preference for clean label products over younger people. Buyers of sandwich bread also have fewer reservations against E-numbers. +++

How much of the packaged ... do you have to throw away on average?

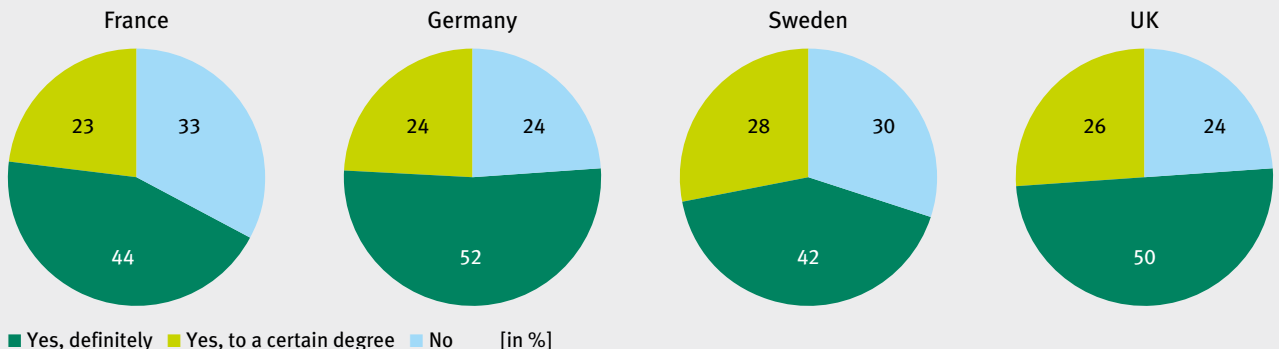
Neither purchase frequency nor volume have impact on the graphs



To what degree would you wish that the shelf life was 2 days longer?



Are you worried about E-numbers in your bread to a degree that if possible you would choose a "clean label" (i.e. a package with no E-numbers on it)?





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