



An intensive training program on sensory evaluation and a consumer-oriented method



Training within the HortiFoodTrends Project

Between November 2024 and June 2025, the HortiFoodTrends project delivered an intensive training programme in sensory analysis and consumer research in Skierniewice. The initiative focused on strengthening the InHort team's skills in sensory evaluation and consumer studies, intending to support the development of innovative, consumer-oriented horticultural products.

Why Sensory Analysis Matters

Excellence in sensory analysis is essential in developing innovative food products. Training in these methodologies represents a major strategic investment for several reasons. Sensory analysis enables organisations to truly understand consumers, going far beyond simple stated intentions. It provides rigorous tools to measure, compare, and optimise the sensory characteristics of products. In an industry where taste, texture, aroma, and appearance determine commercial success, these capabilities are fundamental.

Modern methods combine speed and reliability, allowing companies to accelerate product development while reducing the costs associated with failures. Building qualified teams creates internal capacity for evaluation and innovation. This autonomy translates into faster decision-making, more iterations in product development, and ultimately better products reaching consumers. Investing in sensory analysis training means investing in the ability to innovate successfully and sustainably.



Rigour in Sensory Analysis

Training in sensory analysis is essential to control the biases inherent in human evaluation. Although anyone can taste, sensory responses may be misleading

due to physiological and psychological factors. Presentation order, contrast and context effects, sensory fatigue, expectations related to appearance or brand, and individual sensitivity differences can all distort results without strict protocols. It is this methodological rigour that transforms simple tasting into a reliable scientific evaluation

A Two-Stage Training Programme

The training programme was structured **into two complementary phases** to ensure progressive skills development. **An introductory session** brought fundamental knowledge in sensory analysis principles and panelist selection. This was followed by an **advanced phase** in which researchers took part in three intensive 3-day sessions, delving into more sophisticated methodologies.

From Sensory Evaluation to Consumer Insights

During the sensory analysis module, participants learned how to set up and manage sensory panels, work with classical methods such as Quantitative Descriptive Analysis (QDA), and apply faster approaches like CATA and Sorting Tasks. Best laboratory practices and modern, computer-based data collection and analysis tools were also a key part of the programme.

The consumer research module focused on understanding consumer preferences and behaviour. It covered hedonic testing, emotional profiling, and qualitative methods such as focus groups and in-depth interviews. Participants were also introduced to Design Thinking as a practical framework for innovation, with additional online sessions dedicated to effective survey design.

Learning by Doing

Throughout the programme, participants worked with real data, applying the methods in practice and interpreting results using accessible, no-code statistical tools. Professional software, including FIZZ and XLSTAT, supported data collection and multivariate analysis.

Building Capacity for Innovation

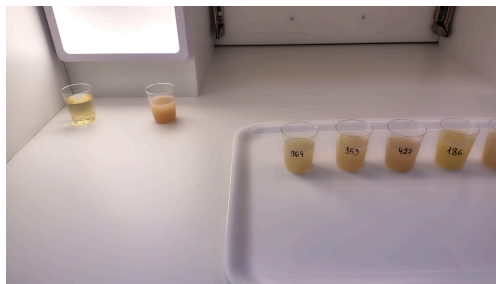
The training strengthened InHort's internal expertise and created a solid foundation for faster, more consumer-oriented innovation in horticultural product development.

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