Title
The taste of cider: Motives and socioeconomics in cider consumption

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Conference Presentation

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Keywords
Apple cider, motivation, geographical protection, sales, Norway

Research Question
To investigate the importance of consumers’ motives and other factors for the growth in sales of domestically produced apple cider.

Methods
Several data sources and statistical methods including the bounded beta regression model, the graded response model, and trend analysis.

Results
Norwegian sales of apple cider has recently increased exponentially, and age, gender, wine interest, and taste are key factors in explaining this increase.

Abstract
Introduction
Apple is a healthy and nutritious food, but in many European countries, the consumption is falling (Fedrigotti and Fisher, 2020). The same has happened in Norway. But over the last twenty years, Norwegian apple farmers have discovered a new outlet for apples. In 2009, high quality apple cider from Hardanger gained a geographical indication protection. This national public certification scheme was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to provide legal safeguards for food products linked to specific regions or traditional specialties. In 2016, farms
were allowed to sell fruit wine with alcohol content up to 22% from their farms, and cider tourism and other activities related to cider production increased. Later, there has been an increase emphasis on cider quality, and Norwegian producers have won several international cider awards.

Research objectives
The research objectives are threefold. First, a trend analysis is conducted to discover the trends in sale of domestic and imported cider. Second, cider consumers’ characteristics and motives are investigated. Third, the characteristics and motives of cider consumers are compared with those of wine consumers as analyzed in Gustavsen and Rickertsen (2020).

Data
Two data sources are used. First, sales and price data from the national retail monopoly (Vinmonopolet) for alcoholic beverages with more than 4.75% were used. Data for the period 2004 - 2023 were used in the trend analysis. Sales of cider at farms, hotels, bars, restaurants, and duty-free shops were not included in our data. Second, data from the Norwegian Monitor Survey (NMS) was used. This is a nationally representative survey of adults aged 15 - 95 years. The NMS is Norway’s most comprehensive consumer and opinion survey, and it covers a broad range of topics including demographics and socioeconomic information, political preferences, viewpoints on moral and ethical issues, and self-perceived happiness, health, and food and drinking habits including the frequencies of cider consumption (Ipsos-MMI, 2016). In our model, 3.433 respondents from 18 to 80 years of age were included.

Methods
To analyze the trend in sales and prices of cider, nonparametric methods will be used. To analyze individual frequencies of cider consumption we follow Gustavsen and Rickertsen (2020), who simulated the beta distributions from nominal interval variables. To estimate the relationships between sale frequencies and covariates, the beta regression setup in Ferrari and Cribari-Neto (2004) was used. To take account of respondents who never drank cider, odds ratios were included in the model (Stasinopoulos et al., 2017). To account for other variables such as cultural interests, wine interests, and taste, latent variables were constructed by using the graded response model (Samejima, 1969).

Preliminary results
The work is still in its initial phase. Real prices of cider remained quite stable between 2010 and 2023, however, the sales of cider increased nearly exponentially over the period. After 2016, the apple farms were allowed to sell their apple cider from the farms, and the increase in sales shifted upwards. The sales were about ten times as large in 2023 as in 2016.

The preliminary analysis of the survey data suggests that female respondents drank cider more frequently than male respondents, and younger respondents drank cider more frequently than older respondents. Among the highest motivational factors are interest in wine and wine culture and the taste. Interest in cider or cider culture were not investigated specifically in the survey.

References
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