RTG Research Colloquium

Friday, February 28th, 2025

Carola Grebitus
(Arizona State University)
Presents
"Strategies for Reducing Food Waste Along the Value Chain – The Case of Imperfect Produce"

Abstract:

Reducing food waste is one of the most effective ways to improve food security and reduce the carbon footprint of the food system. Approximately 20% of the discarded food is wasted for cosmetic reasons, being too misshapen, missized, or blemished to sell. Our project aims to investigate the opportunities for imperfect produce to enter the market and reduce food waste, focusing on the entire value chain, including producers, distributors, retailers, and consumers. To achieve this goal, our project has three main research objectives: (1) assessing opportunities and barriers for imperfect produce along the value chain; (2) identifying factors that impact retailers' decision to offer imperfect produce and evaluating their willingness to do so through analysis of substitution rates between perfect and imperfect produce; (3) evaluating consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for fresh and processed imperfect produce and investigating how information about the potential benefits of consuming imperfect produce affects preferences and WTP through behavioral economics experiments. Our ultimate goal is to develop practices and policy interventions that could help reduce food waste, aid farmer production, and benefit the environment (e.g., through reduced carbon footprints) by introducing imperfect foods into the market.

Bio:

Carola Grebitus is a Dean's Council Distinguished Professor in the Morrison School of Agribusiness at Arizona State University. She studies food economics and marketing, with an emphasis on healthy and sustainable food choices to support evidence-based policymaking. Her research is focused on modeling consumers' food choices in general, and consumers' decision strategies in particular. Her current research includes consumer preferences for imperfect foods and the effect of mindfulness on healthy food choices. In her research Professor Grebitus applies a variety of methods ranging from experimental auctions and choice experiments to eye tracking and taste tests. To date, she has secured more than $5 million in funding from, e.g., the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She has published over 80 peerreviewed articles in journals, such as, the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Business Strategy and the Environment, and the European Journal of Marketing. At ASU, she teaches courses in Food Product Innovation and Development, and Behavioral and Experimental Economics. Professor Grebitus has been recognized for her efforts in teaching, research and outreach with awards,

such as, the "Huizingh Award for Undergraduate Service to Students," the "Centennial Professorship Award" and the "W. P. Carey Dean's Mid-Career Research Award".