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Promoting Animal Welfare From The Retailers Fridge: Cue Attributes Linked To Purchase Of Fresh Chicken Meat

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Background

Consumption of broiler chicken is steadily increasing worldwide (1). Consumers base their food choices in several aspects of the products. It is essential for broiler chicken industry to know which aspects consumers emphasize most when selecting products in order to match consumers' expectations and to design marketing strategies.

Materials and Methods

Subjects

A convenience sample of adult (age 18+) respondents (N=203) from the greater Copenhagen area carried out an online survey in December 2014. The consumer sample was approximately balanced for gender with 56% women and 44% men participating.

Questionnaire design

The survey was specifically designed for the "Sustainable broiler production based on feeding with ensilaged maize" project. Besides socio-demographic information respondents were asked to score importance of several attributes when they are buying fresh chicken meat. Attributes were categorized as a) experience, b) extrinsic quality cues and c) credence attributes. Consumers rated the importance on a five-point scale ranging from 'Not at all important (1)' to 'Very important (5)'.

Results

The consumers purchase of fresh chicken meat was linked to several attribute cues (Table 1).

Most emphasized attribute cues:

- The greatest importance was given for the *freshness* of the chicken meat.
- All other experience attributes had also great importance.
- Consumers emphasized the extrinsic attributes *price* and *durability*.
- Credence attributes of *sustainability* and *production information* were also important for consumers.
- *Organic production*, *animal welfare* and *free from salmonella* had as high median scores as the above-mentioned attributes, but interquartile ranges (IQR) were wider.

Least emphasized attribute cues:

- The least important attribute was *inspiration/recipes on the package* (md=1). Also other cues such as *packaging* and *labels* were not perceived as important.

Aim of the study

To investigate which attribute cues are important for cosmopolitan Danish consumers when buying fresh chicken meat.

Emphasis was placed on attributes cues for expected sensory experiences, extrinsic quality and product credence such as animal welfare and sustainability.

Table 1. Importance of attributes associated to fresh chicken meat purchase on a 5-point scale.

Category	Factors	Median	IQR
Experience	Appearance	4	1
	Smell	4	1
	Texture	4	1
	Freshness	5	1
	Taste	4	1
Extrinsic	Fat percentage	3	2
	Price	4	1
	Locally produced	3	1
	Organic	4	2
	Durability	4	1
	Packaging	3	2
	Inspiration/recipes on the package	1	1
Credence	Animal welfare	4	2
	Sustainability	4	1
	Labels e.g. Danish "Keyhole"	3	2
	Information of production	4	1
	Free from Salmonella	4	2

Conclusions

The experience attributes had all great importance for consumers when buying chicken meat with *freshness* as the most salient attribute. The results also indicated that details of broiler chicken production are important for consumers. However, production information on the package may be more beneficial than inspiration/recipes and diverse labels.

Animal welfare, *organic production* and *free from salmonella* were important, but ratings had a wider range than the above-mentioned factors; thus indicating different levels of importance given to these attribute cues. Since expectations for sensory factors including freshness were most salient, these findings indicate some challenges for marketing strategies aiming to promote consumer choices for health, sustainability and animal welfare.

Reference

1. OECD-FAO. (2014) Agricultural Outlook.173-188.

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