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Consumer Topics

9 - PERCEPTION OF LAMB EXTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES BY BRAZILIAN CONSUMER AT PURCHASE TIME

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Objectives: In Brazil, the consumption of lamb is small (0.7 kg/inhabitant/year). Because of it, a great part of the population does not know what factors to take into account when choosing this meat at purchase time. A consumer can be considered frequent when he/she eats lamb at least once a month. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the degree of importance that consumers ascribe to certain lamb extrinsic attributes at the time of purchase and whether there is a difference between the behavior of frequent and non-frequent consumers.

Materials and Methods: An online survey was carried out using the Google Forms tool during the months of May and June 2019 to obtain responses of a convenience sample of consumers from all over Brazil. The survey was made available via email and Facebook in groups of 20 universities (from the main Brazilian ones) and the criterion for selecting participants was only their interest in taking part of the study. Questions about lamb buying habits, in relation to the frequency of consumption and extrinsic attributes to the meat that are taken into account at the time of purchase, were asked. For this, a scale ranging from “very important”, “important”, “unimportant” and “very unimportant” was used. Consumers were grouped into clusters according to the frequency of consumption and the data on the importance given to the researched attributes were studied according to the relative frequency. Chi-square tests (at the 5% significance level) were carried out to investigate whether there was a relationship between the degree of importance attributed to lamb extrinsic factors and the frequency of consumption and whether there were attributes considered more important.

Results: At the end of the survey, 1,457 valid responses had been collected. Three groups (clusters) of consumers were separated in terms of frequency of lamb consumption: 172 consumers (11.8%) were considered frequent (consumers who consume lamb meat “once or more a week”, “2 to 3 times a month” or “once a month”), 444 (30.5%) were non-frequent (consumers who responded “less than once a month”), and the rest (57.8%) were considered non-lamb consumers (consumers who responded “never consume lamb”). Table 1 show the relative frequencies of lamb consumer clusters (frequent and non-frequent) regarding the importance they give to “organic production”, “quality label”, “ease of cooking”, “price” and “type of packaging”. Organic production of animals was the least important item for both groups. The ease of cooking and type of packaging attributes were of intermediate importance and the price and presence of quality label appeared as the most important ones in the purchasing decision-making process. Price was the only attribute that received different ($p < 0.05$) degrees of importance among clusters and was considered more important for non-frequent



consumers. Non-lamb consumers were not asked about this topic, as if they do not consume lamb, they generally do not buy it.

Image:

Table 1. Relative frequency (%) of the importance given by frequent and non-frequent consumers to extrinsic attributes of lamb at purchasing time

Cluster	Importance	Organic production (p*=0,26)	Quality label (p=0,18)	Ease of cooking (p=0,28)	Price (p=0,02)	Type of packaging (p=0,98)
Frequent consumers (n=172)	Very unimportant	36.0	18.0	19.2	15.7	20.3
	Unimportant	34.9	22.7	24.4	30.8	29.1
	Important	20.4	30.2	41.9	36.6	34.9
	Very important	8.7	29.1	14.5	16.9	15.7
Non-frequent consumers (n=444)	Very unimportant	34.9	16.4	14.9	12.8	19.4
	Unimportant	42.6	17.1	31.5	21.2	30.6
	Important	15.8	39.0	38.7	41.7	34.2
	Very important	6.7	27.5	14.9	24.3	15.8

*Pearson's chi-square test.

Conclusion: Only a small portion (11.8%) of the convenience sample of Brazilian consumers that responded the on-line survey eat lamb frequently (at least once a month). Among the evaluated extrinsic attributes that are taken into account at the time of purchase, the most important are the presence of quality label and price. The behavior of frequent and non-frequent consumers differs only in relation to price, which is considered more important for the second group.

Keywords: consumer behavior, frequency of consumption, price, quality label, sheep meat