

CONSUMER CONCERNS ABOUT PORK PRODUCTION IN FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS

Miranda P.M. Meuwissen¹, Karine Latouche², Ivo A.C.M. van der Lans³ and Alain Carpentier⁴

¹Institute for Risk Management in Agriculture (IRMA), Wageningen University, Hollandseweg 1, 6706 KN, Wageningen, the Netherlands.

²Institute National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA), Rennes, France.

³Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands.

Abstract

In (re)designing food supply chains it has become common practice to design them as so-called “consumer-driven chains”. Main questions in this respect include what consumer concerns to address, to what extent and in what sense. For instance, what do consumers perceive under concepts such as “animal welfare” and “environmentally friendly”. Also, what trade-off do they make between aspects of food safety, naturalness of production, the sensory quality of the end product, and production costs, i.e. price? Are consumer—and/or citizen—concerns translated into an actual willingness to pay? What labels and quality assurance schemes are appreciated by consumers? In the current study, these issues are addressed for pork supply chains in France and the Netherlands. In France, 1000 consumers were interviewed face to face. In the Netherlands, using internet and net boxes, there were 1400 respondents. Possible concerns were not only described in general terms, such as “food safety”, but also in terms of underlying components, such as “without additives” and “irradiated but more safe”. In the Dutch survey we also elicited consumers’ opinions about related aspects such as country of origin and desired degree of

traceability. Results show that in France the safety of pork is concern number one, while in the Netherlands this is animal welfare. The latter conclusion is supported by answers to an open-ended question, a hybrid conjoint analysis task and a willingness to pay question. Results from the Dutch survey also show that EKO meat scores best for all concerns, but that, nevertheless, most consumers buy standard, i.e. non-labelled, pork. A similar conclusion holds for the French consumers. These results imply that in redesigning pork supply chains some basic ‘licence to produce’ issues should be incorporated, but changes do not need to be very drastically. Pork chains strongly deviating from current production chains will likely stay niche markets.

Selected references

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