

Public opinion on UK milk marketing and dairy cow welfare

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Abstract:

Interview questionnaires were administered to the general public in central Scotland and northern England during summer 2007 to investigate consumer awareness of UK dairy production methods, welfare issues and recognition of 'quality assurance' product logos. Fifty percent of respondents gave UK dairy animal welfare a positive rating. Recognition of individual quality assurance logos was poor and 75% of respondents stated that they did not intentionally seek to buy products with any of the logos. Respondents' perceptions of good dairy welfare included: appropriate feeding, good stockmanship, plenty of space, freedom to roam/free range and environmental cleanliness. Half of respondents felt they were poorly informed about food production and the majority of respondents (68%) would like more information on food production. Respondents believed that information on animal welfare provided by veterinarians and farmers would be reliable. Most respondents (93%) said they would pay more for good dairy welfare. The findings show that the general public are interested in animal welfare but could be better informed on dairy animal production and welfare. Veterinarians and farmers may have a potentially important role in providing this information with increasing demand for higher welfare provenance products potentially helping to improve animal welfare.

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