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On mandatory labeling of animal welfare attributes

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Abstract

This paper assesses US resident support for mandatory labeling of animal welfare information on pork and egg products and outlines policy considerations for assessment prior to implementing any mandatory labeling policies regarding animal welfare practices. Results suggest consumers support mandatory labeling indicating use of gestation crates (stalls) and laying hen cages. Estimates suggest consumers would be willing to pay about 20% higher pork and egg prices to obtain this production practice information. Demographic and latent perception drivers of this support are highlighted. Multiple issues that warrant consideration prior to imposing mandatory labeling are discussed revealing lines of corresponding future research.

Research highlights

► Examinaion of US resident support for a mandatory labeling scheme of animal welfare information on pork and egg products. ► Economic framework for use in considering any mandatory labeling policies regarding animal welfare production practices.

Keywords: Animal handling; Animal welfare; Consumer demand; Gestation crate/stall; Laying hen cage; Mandatory labeling; Voting behavior

Article Outline

Table 1. Summary statistics for select measures. 

Note: Values presented are means, standard deviations are in parentheses.

[a] This question was asked regarding "total food consumption including at home, in restaurants, take-outs, etc." and is shown in the Appendix.
[b] This summarizes responses to the two-question sequence discussed on page 4.

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Perceptions: Information Accuracy and Ability to Influence and Assure Animal Welfare[a]. 

[a] All questions were asked using 7-point Likert scales. Information accuracy questions ranged from *Very Inaccurate* (1) to *Very Accurate* (7). Ability to influence and assure questions ranged from *Very Low Ability* (1) to *Very High Ability* (7).
[b] These questions, and definition of acronyms are presented in the Appendix. The two sets of factors explain 80.26% and 71.88% of the total variance across individual questions, respectively.

Table 3. Model estimates of demand for mandatory labeling of gestation crate and laying hen cage use. 

[a] Income was divided by $1000 to facilitate model convergence.
[b] WTP point estimates calculated at covariate means.
[c] Confidence intervals were calculated using Krinsky–Robb bootstrapping techniques.
∗ denotes coefficient estimates statistically significant at the 0.10 level. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. Each variable is defined in Table 1 or Table 2.
∗ ∗ denotes coefficient estimates statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. Each variable is defined in Table 1 or Table 2.