

Gender specific preferences and attitudes towards meat

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Abstract

Recently, red meat avoidance has shown an increase in the industrialised countries, especially among young female consumers. Sensory factors as bloodiness in meat, difficulties coping with eating a fellow animal, and private body concern appear as the main reasons for red meat exclusion. The study addressed whether sensory attributes in meat are linked to attitudes and beliefs about meat. Based on previous studies, the expectation that red meat is linked to dislike and negative attitudes among young females was tested. The study used a quantitative approach, applying both a quantitative sensory profiling with trained panellists and a consumer study with a convenience sample. The trained sensory panel evaluated 22 sensory attributes of five meats, ranging from red (beef) to white (chicken) meat varieties. Comparable samples of the same meat varieties were served in randomised order to 206 young consumers, males and females between the ages of 14 and 30 years, in a blind preference test. Beliefs and attitudes towards meat-eating, and desired change in consumption frequencies of flesh products were also collected. Consumers preferred the white meat (chicken) to the red meats. The mean hedonic rating of meat decreased progressively as the meat increased in red colour intensity and typical meat flavours, and this was particularly evident for females. Females displayed, in contrast to males, significantly lower mean hedonic scores for the reddest meat varieties, i.e. ostrich, lamb and beef. Males displayed, compared with females, also a significantly higher attitudinal support for “pro-red meat” statements. The results were strengthened by significantly higher desired increase in consumption frequency of beef among male consumers. The link between consumer and product was established and revealed a close relationship between specific sensory attributes of meats and consumer attitudes towards meat. For example, sensory attributes related to white meat were correlated with negative attitudes towards red meat. The hypothesis that dislike of red meat varieties is more prevalent among females was supported.

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