

Consumer Food Safety Risk Perceptions and Attitudes: Impacts on Beef Consumption across Countries

Ted C. Schroeder, *Kansas State University*

Glynn T. Tonsor, *Michigan State University*

Joost M.E. Pennings, *Maastricht University*

James Mintert, *Kansas State University*

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Abstract

Beef food safety events have contributed to considerable market volatility, produced varied consumer reactions, created policy debates, sparked heated trade disputes, and generally contributed to beef industry frustrations. Utilizing data from a total of 4,005 consumers in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Japan in a Double-Hurdle modeling framework, we examine whether consumers altered their beef consumption behavior because of their risk aversion and risk perceptions stemming from information about beef food safety in recent years. Results reveal stark differences in risk perceptions and risk aversion regarding beef food safety across consumers in the four countries and that these differences are revealed through different beef consumption behavior. An improved understanding of food safety perceptions and attitudes will enable policy makers and agricultural industries to better anticipate consumers changing consumption behavior, if a food safety event occurs. Food safety management strategies vary across countries because of identified differences in food safety risk attitudes and risk perceptions.

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