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Fresh Beef Steak Purchasing Motivation is affected by Demographics and Beef Preferences of Consumers

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Objectives

A consumer study was conducted to measure the impact of demographics and beef preferences on purchasing motivators of fresh beef steaks.

Materials and Methods

Panelists were recruited in conjunction with a beef consumer panel in 4 cities in the United States. Consumers ($n = 480$; 120/city) were evenly distributed in Lubbock, Texas; Manhattan, Kansas; San Francisco, California; and Gainesville, Florida. Consumers were asked to evaluate the importance of purchasing motivators when buying fresh beef steaks on a 10-cm, verbally anchored line scale. The motivators included animal welfare (WEL); antibiotic use in the animal (ANT); brand of product (BRAND); color; diet of animal (corn, grass, vegetarian fed; DIET); eating satisfaction claims (ex: guaranteed tender; CLAIM); familiarity with cut (CUT); growth hormone use in the animal (HORM); local; natural or organic claims (NATORG); nutrient content (NUTR); packaging type (PACK); price; size, weight and thickness; and USDA grade (marbling). Demographics obtained included gender, household size, marital status, age, ethnic origin, annual household income and education level. Beef preferences identified included weekly beef consumption, most important palatability trait when eating beef, degree of doneness (DOD) preferred when eating beef, and meat product preferred for flavor. Statistical analyses were conducted using the procedures of SAS (Version 9.3; SAS Inst. Inc., Cary, NC). Treatment comparisons were tested for significance using PROC GLIMMIX with $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Traits including WEL, ANT, BRAND, color, DIET, HORM, local, NATORG, NUTR, PACK and price were of more ($P < 0.05$) importance to females than males. Married consumers put greater ($P < 0.05$) purchasing emphasis on ANT, DIET, CLAIM, CUT, HORM and local than single consumers. Californians had higher ($P < 0.05$) average ratings for WEL, ANT, color, DIET, HORM, local and NATORG, than all other states. Household sizes of > 5 people placed more ($P < 0.05$) importance on BRAND, DIET, and NUTR than consumers from smaller households. Consumers with 1 to 2 people per household placed less ($P < 0.05$) importance on ANT and local purchasing motivators compared to larger households. Antibiotics, DIET, HORM, local and NATORG were more ($P < 0.05$) important to consumers over 60 yr old than to consumers under 29 yr old. Caucasian/White consumers placed less ($P < 0.05$) importance on BRAND, HORM, NATORG, NUTR and PACK than other ethnicities. As household income increased, consumers were more ($P < 0.05$) concerned about ANT and HORM. Heavy beef eaters (4 or more times/wk) were less ($P < 0.05$) influenced by WEL, ANT, color, DIET, HORM, local, NATORG, and NUTR, but more ($P < 0.05$) influenced by USDA grade than light beef eaters (0 to 3 times/wk). In general, as DOD preference increased from rare to well-done, importance of WEL, ANT, DIET, HORM, local, NATORG, and NUTR increased. Consumers who preferred flavor of beef viewed WEL, ANT, HORM, NATORG, NUTR, PACK, and price less ($P < 0.05$) concerning than consumers who prefer flavor of other meat proteins.

Conclusion

Gender, marital status, geographic location, household size, age, ethnic origin, annual household income, weekly beef consumption, DOD preference, and flavor preference affected many beef purchasing motivators of consumers. It is important to consider the demographics and preferences of consumers when marketing fresh beef steaks.