

A study of the factors that influence consumer attitudes towards beef products using the conjoint market analysis tool

Abstract: Beef producers looking for a competitive edge in today's markets need information about the qualities that consumers consider most important. Using conjoint marketing analysis allowed the investigators to sort out the most relevant characteristics for meat purchasers.

Investigators:

Brian Mennecke
Anthony Townsend
Dermot Hayes
Steven Lonergan
Iowa State University

More details:

www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/grants/2009-1/M2005-27.pdf

The results of this study demonstrate that region of origin is the most important factor influencing consumer attitudes regarding beef products. Consumer preference for beef that is locally produced will be more highly valued than products produced in other regions of the country and in other countries. This indicates that a premium can be obtained by local Iowa producers marketing their products as a local-Iowa brand.



What was done and why?

Beef producers are facing several significant challenges as the industry moves toward de-commoditizing beef products.

This study sought to determine the relative importance of the factors that will produce the greatest value for consumers and the optimal profitability for producers. Consumers were asked about their attitudes and preferences related to traceable beef products. Branding and product differentiation will be rewarded only if the consumer is willing to pay for the information or assurances associated with the information that is provided by a brand or labeling.

What did we learn?

The conjoint technique of marketing analysis was used to examine consumer opinions on a set of beef steak characteristics. This study was the first to use conjoint methodology to examine a national sample of U.S. consumers in order to identify their preferences for beef across a number of product characteristics.

The analyses demonstrated that for all respondents, region of origin was a substantially more important quality than other product characteristics. It was followed in importance by animal breed, traceability, animal feed and beef quality. The least important qualities as ranked by consumers in the survey were cost of cut, farm ownership, use (or non-use) of growth promoters and whether the product was guaranteed to be tender. Animal science students who took part in the survey were more likely to rank beef quality above other factors.

In summary, the ideal steak for the survey subjects would be from a locally produced Angus that is traceable to the farm or point of origin and fed a mixture of grain and grass. If the product was not produced locally, respondents indicated that their preferred production states are, in order from most to least preferred: Iowa, Texas, Nebraska and Kansas.