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Research in Food Distribution and Marketing: PhD Dissertation**

Trust, Perceptions, Intentions and Behaviour in Meat Consumption

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Abstract

Consumers' concerns about animal diseases, production and processing methods could drive their choices of food products. Consumers' choices of food products will influence their nutritional status. Understanding preferences for food products could inform policy and assist in forecasting future demand for food products. In this study, the effects of generalized trust in people and trust in food agents regarding the safety of food on the demand for different forms of meat products, on preferences for pork production characteristics and on human health risk perceptions about bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and chronic wasting disease (CWD) are analysed. The following hypotheses are tested (i) consumers who have lower levels of trust (both general and agent specific trust about food safety) are more likely to purchase fresh meat products and less likely to purchase processed meat products as compared to those consumers who have higher levels of trust. Consumers who have lower levels of trust might be more concerned about the use of additives, flavors and the public information on cancer risks of processed food, for example as compared to those consumers who have higher levels of trust; (ii) consumers who have lower levels of trust (both general and agent specific trust about food safety) are willing to pay higher premiums for pork produced under more traditional forms of production as compared to those consumers who have higher levels of trust. Consumers who have lower levels of trust might prefer traditionally raised pork over conventional pork as compared to those consumers who have higher levels of trust due to concerns about the use of antibiotics, the feed given to animals and the use of hormones, for example; (iii) trust (both general and agent specific trust about food safety) is negatively related to human health risk perceptions about BSE and CWD. The three studies are linked in that the effects of trust on

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consumer behaviour are analysed in three different contexts and trust is measured using the same questions. The first hypothesis is tested using cluster analysis, demand system analysis, probit models, data from two Canada wide surveys (2008 and 2011) and meat purchase data for the period 2002 to 2009 for the same households. The second hypothesis is tested using cluster analysis, conditional and random parameter logit models and data from choice experiments and surveys in Canada in 2011 and in Edmonton in 2009 and 2011. The third hypothesis is tested using ordered probit regressions and data from surveys conducted in Canada in 2009 and 2010, in the U.S. in 2010 (two surveys) and in Japan in 2009. In summary, the results suggest that households with respondents who have lower levels of trust generally purchased more fresh meat products and fewer processed meat products as compared to households with respondents who have medium or higher levels of trust. Households in the low trust cluster generally substitute fresh and semi-processed meat products more than households in the medium and higher trust clusters. Households in the high trust cluster generally substitute semi-processed and fully processed meat products more than households in the low and medium trust clusters. A little surprising but respondents who have higher levels of trust are generally willing to pay higher premiums for traditionally raised pork as compared to those respondents who have lower levels of trust. Although the effects of trust on consumer's human health risk perceptions about BSE and CWD are not generally the same across countries or between the two diseases, trust does play a role in influencing risk perceptions in each country. In conclusion, trust is an important influence on consumer behaviour.

Keywords: animal diseases, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, chronic wasting disease, consumption, demand, human health risk, meat, natural pork, production attributes, quality perceptions, risk perceptions, traditionally raised pork, trust, willingness to pay

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