

Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions About Rabbit Meat in The Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of the Eastern cape consumers towards the use of rabbit meat as an alternative animal protein source. A sample of 400 (n = 400) respondents from the university of Fort Hare Alice campus were randomly selected to complete a guided questionnaire on the perceptions of rabbit meat as an animal protein source. The questionnaire was divided into 3 categories which included demography, familiarity with rabbit meat, and perceptions about rabbit meat. 75% of respondents had never consumed rabbit meat and the main reason was the unfamiliarity of the respondents (46%) to rabbit meat. 19% of respondents perceived rabbit meat to be similar to chicken. A chi-square test on demographic factors and perceptions about rabbit meat was not significant (at p 0.05) therefore they were excluded. A combined 45% of the respondents were likely to try rabbit meat at restaurants. 44% of respondents were likely to buy rabbit meat from grocery stores while 62% were likely to consume it if it was available from friends and relatives. The quality of meat is positively correlated with the health aspect of the meat. Presentation of the meat and quality are also positively correlated. In other meat characteristics that are considered by consumers when buying meat, the correlation was not significant. This study discovered that most students were unfamiliar with rabbit meat, therefore, knew very little about it. It is recommended that consumers are educated about the health benefits of rabbit meat and its benefits especially for consumers with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. This recommendation will help to increase consumer knowledge about rabbit meat before it is introduced in the market so that it can be bought.