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Evaluation of the Popular Restaurants Program as a Food and Nutrition Security Action in Brazil.

FERNANDA DIAS BARTOLOMEU ABADIO FINCO¹, MARCUS VINÍCIUS ALVES FINCO²

¹*University of Hohenheim, Institute of Biological Chemistry and Nutrition, Germany*

²*University of Hohenheim, Institute for Agricultural Economics and Social Sciences in the Tropics and Subtropics, Germany*

Abstract

The topic Food and Nutrition Security has been strongly discussed in Brazil, leading the country to develop a policy and the implementation of social programs in order to achieve the food security of all population. Within these actions is the “Popular Restaurants Program” which aims to offer meals with very low cost (US\$ 1,69) to people experiencing food insecurity situation. Aiming at evaluate if the programme was in accordance to its objective, a cross section study was conducted at two units (restaurants) so-called “Centro” and “Taquaralto” in Palmas City, Tocantins, Brazil. Socioeconomic, health, antropometric (weight and height) and dietetic data of users were collected from 600 individuals (300 at each unit). In addition, the willingness to pay (WTP) for the improvement of foodservice was also analysed by the Contigent Valuation Method and econometric models were formulated, to face WTP value with socioeconomic variables (income, education, gender, age and frequency of use). The monthly income per capita showed wide variability between users of both units (US\$ 00.00 - US\$ 1775.14 to Centro and US\$ 00.00 - US\$ 1183.00 to Taquaralto). Approximately 30 % of sample was considered overweight and low intake of fruits and vegetables was also observed. WTP to Centro unit was US\$ 70 004 (monthly/agregate value) or US\$1.74 month⁻¹ person⁻¹ and to Taquaralto was US\$ 17 829 (monthly/agregate value), or US\$ 0.44 month⁻¹ person⁻¹. The higher value attributed to Centro can be partially explained by the expressive number of people willing to pay more to the improvement of the foodservice program. Results suggest that, as a food and nutrition security program, it would have a focus to the whole service which includes user’s health and profile, and not only to the food distribution. Also it is hoped that this work could help public managers in order to contribute to the improvement of programme actions.

Keywords: Food security, nutrition security, popular restaurant, willingness-to-pay