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Attributed Importance for Consumers from Santa Maria (RS-Brazil) to Lamb Characteristics - A Fuzzy Approach

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Abstract

To evaluate the preferences of the Brazilian consumers with regard to the properties of the available meats in the market has been the focus of several works. However, works evaluating the case of the lam/mutton are rare in national and international literature.

Models that represent the opinion of meat consumers in relation to its expectations and perceptions can be an efficient indicator in the determination of technological trajectories or market to be followed concerning the improvement of the quality, productivity and profitability of the producers and industry. The conventional approach assumes that the properties of a product and the values of the consumer are linked and that this connection can be explicated through the collection of data derived from one technique of qualitative interview called laddering. Laddering assumes that the knowledge of a homogeneous group of respondents is organised in a multidimensional set of hierarchies and that this knowledge is categorical, that is, nominal values (0 or 1) arranged in categories. Although it establishes the relations between the product and the consumer, the use of nominal values limits the capacity of the methodology to deal with vague or inexact knowledge. As far as the action of the consumer is not always directed by an only value of consumption and that the degree of adhesion to these values can be variable, fuzzy numbers and intervals can be used as tool of description and aggregation of these values.

Initially introduced in the analysis of complex systems, fuzzy intervals allow the modeling of systems with badly distinguished borders and fit to the linguistic representation of phenomena of a determined universe of discourse.

Several works use fuzzy intervals in the research of consumers' behaviour .

In this work data from the behaviour of consumers of lamb were analyzed, considering the uncertainties (vague or inexact knowledge) present in the speech (linguistic terms) used by the consumers through a fuzzy inference method.

Keywords: Consumer perception, fuzzy number, lamb