



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2022, hybrid conference

“Can agroecological farming feed the world?
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Understanding consumers’ perceptions of meat safety and quality at pre-harvest and harvest stages of production in Afghanistan – a qualitative content analysis

MUSTAFA NASIRI¹, BIRGIT GASSLER², RAMONA TEUBER³

¹*Justus Liebig University Giessen, Institute of Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Faculty of Agricultural Science, Nutritional Sciences, and Environmental Management, Germany*

²*Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Institute for Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Department of Agricultural Sciences, Nutritional Sciences and Environmental Management,*

³*Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Institute of Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Faculty of Agricultural Science, Nutritional Sciences, and Environmental Management,*

Abstract

Food safety issues in meat may originate at different stages of production. However, there is little understanding of how consumers in developing countries perceive meat safety and quality at each stage. This study aimed at studying consumers’ perception of meat quality and safety in Afghanistan with a distinct focus on evaluating perceptions at the production, slaughtering & processing stages along the supply chain. To this end, qualitative data were collected through seven focus group discussions in Kabul and Bamyan, Afghanistan between September - December 2020. A total of 52 respondents, mostly young and educated, were recruited. The Total Food Quality Model (TFQM) was used as a conceptual framework for evaluating consumers’ meat quality judgment before and after purchase, and the data were analysed based on qualitative content analysis using MAXQDA version 2020. Our findings revealed that before purchase, freshness, place-of-origin, safety, and Halal slaughtering, while after purchase, taste and tenderness are the most important quality attributes. At the production stage, the meat of both the sedentary and nomadic ruminants is perceived higher in quality and animal welfare, with lower food safety hazards due to feeding on natural pasture. While the meat of urban-raised ruminants is perceived as unsafe and of lower quality and animal welfare due to feeding on food-waste. At the slaughtering and processing stage, supermarket meat is perceived better in hygiene, but not fresh. In contrast, butchery meat is perceived as fresh, and natural, but unhygienic. According to the respondents, food fraud is practised at all stages of meat production. In addition, FG participants in this study relied heavily on and trusted traditional butchery despite associating the higher prevalence of food safety hazards, and lower level of animal welfare in the system compared to modern supermarkets and slaughterhouses. Hence, this behaviour may suggest a phenomenon called “optimistic bias” among consumers. Albeit adding interesting insights, the findings in this study cannot be generalised due to the nature of qualitative data collection. Hence, further studies based on quantitative data are required with a larger and more diverse sample size to validate the results of our study.

Keywords: Consumer perception, meat quality, meat safety, nomadic, optimistic bias, pasture-type, place-of-origin, sedentary, supermarket, traditional butchery