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Consumer preferences and willingness to pay for certified high-iron beans among urban households in West Pokot County, Kenya

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Abstract

Enhancing transparency in the food system through initiatives like product certification is crucial as it provides consumers with essential information to facilitate informed nutritional choices. In the context of common beans, understanding consumer preferences for certified high iron common beans is important to enhance their consumption. To address this, a choice experiment was conducted to determine household decision maker's preferences for certified high iron common beans and the underlying determinants in the urban areas of West Pokot County, Kenya. The data were collected by a multi-stage sampling technique on a sample of 384 household decision makers with the aid of semi-structured questionnaire and choice cards. Data were analysed using JMP 17 and STATA 17 computer software. Mixed logit model results showed household decision makers had a positive preference for certification of high iron common beans by public bodies and mandatory labeling of these beans. However, they had a negative preference for highly processed high iron beans and the certification of high-iron common beans by a private body. Age and education were identified as heterogeneous factors. Relative to the current price of uncertified Nyota beans, a high-iron common bean variety. Household decision makers were willing to pay (Kenya Shillings (KES) 22) and (KES 9) per kilogram for certification by a public body and mandatory labeling of high-iron common beans, respectively. However, they were unwilling to forgo (KES 9) and (KES 18) per kilogram for highly processed beans certified by a private body, respectively. This study therefore recommends mandatory labelling of high-iron beans, a joint private public certification approach, and government-backed certification of high iron common beans. In addition, employing marketing strategies that are tailored to consumers heterogeneous factors and those recognising regional consumer preferences would enhance high iron bean consumption.

Keywords: Certification, choice experiment, consumer preferences, high-iron common beans, urban areas