

Perception of food safety risk in meat consumption and Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) for sanitary measures in meat production in Pokhara valley, Nepal

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Abstract

Livestock is an important source of income generation in the rural livelihood of Nepal. Since there are no intensive livestock farms, the supply of meat for commercial consumption is procured from the rural production within country. Simplistically, a backward economic linkage occurs in the urban consumption and rural production, therefore urban consumption of meat can be a stimulus to the rural economy. With this central theme, it is imperative to study the consumers' perception of meat as a safe food. It was assumed that there are six food safety issues that make the consumer reluctant in meat consumption in Nepal. They were considered as slaughter of sick and dead animals, open delivery and marketing, poor refrigeration practice, drug residues, adulteration, and fear of bird flu. The theory of risk analysis in food safety was reviewed and it was hypothesized that the demographic, and socio- economic variables like age, sex, caste/ethnicity, exposure to media, years of education, and income had effect on the consumers' perception of risk. It was also hypothesized that there could be a relationship between the perception of risk and WTP for sanitary measures in meat production. The study was carried out in Pokhara Sub-metropolitan town in Nepal. A survey of 224 households was done by following probability proportionate to size sampling technique. A structured as well as semi-structured questionnaire was used to trap the respondent's opinions, demographic and socio-economic characteristics. A composite perceived risk score was calculated by gathering consumer's concern on these issues. The risk score was regressed against six independent variables. It was found that awareness about the meat hygiene was the best predictor of perceived risk followed gender. The perception of risk and income of the respondent have significant effect on WTP. The mean additional WTP for sanitary measures was Rs. 9.70 per kg goat meat while estimated total WTP was 13 million for the same. On the basis of these findings, it was recommended that administration of policies that ensure sanitary measures in meat production is important to increase the urban meat consumption. Thus, immediate enforcement of Animal Slaughterhouse and Meat Inspection Act 1997 can be a foreseeable start for the sustainable meat animal development in Nepal. (This study was conducted for the fulfillment of master's degree research)