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Beef consumer segment profiles based on information source usage in Poland

Sylvia Żakowska-Biemans

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to identify market segments based on consumers' usage of information sources about beef and to investigate whether the use of information sources was associated with the type of information consumers were searching for, factors guiding their decision processes to buy beef and motives related to beef consumption. Data were collected in 2014 through a self-administered survey of 501 regular beef consumers. Three distinct clusters were identified: Enthusiast (38.5%), Conservative (43.1%) and Ultra Conservative (18.4%). This study revealed that culinary and personal sources of information on beef were the most frequently used. Taste, perceived healthiness and suitability to prepare many dishes were reported as primary motives to eat beef. These results show that communication channels such as culinary programs and opportunities provided by the development of labelling systems to guarantee beef quality should be considered when developing policies and strategies to increase beef consumption in Poland.

Key words: consumer, beef, motives, information sources, segmentation

Introduction

Beef consumption in Poland has been decreasing steadily for many years. According to data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics – National Research Institute, meat consumption in Poland in the years 1995–2015 increased by 11.5 kg, from 64.0 kg/capita/year to 75.5 kg/capita/year, while beef consumption decreased from 8.8 kg/capita/year to 1.6 kg/capita/year (CSO, 2015a; IAFE-NRI, 2016). Among the major factors influencing the level of consumption, in addition to the level of market prices of beef, was the Polish accession to the EU in May 2004. For the new member states, as for the EU itself, the effects of the accession were profound, and the opening of the common market posed many challenges to the Polish meat sector. Beef exports increased from 66.6 thousand tonnes in 2004 to 377 thousand tonnes in 2014, and Poland became one of the main net exporters of cattle in the EU (CSO, 2015a). Consequently, both the procurement prices of cattle and meat rose considerably in Poland (CSO, 2015a). In recent years in Poland, as in other European countries, the overall trend was upward for white meats and downward for red meats (Henchion, McCarthy, Resconi, & Troy, 2014; Sans, Fontguyon, & Giraud, 2008). Therefore, the level of poultry consumption increased from 10.3 kg/capita/year in 1995 to 29.0 kg/capita/year in 2015. In the same period, consumption levels of pork did not change, remaining at 39.5 kg of pork/capita/year (CSO, 2015b). In 2014, the total consumption of beef in Poland, according to data from food balance sheets, reached 61 thousand tonnes (cooled weight), while 1,505 thousand tonnes of pork and 1,084 thousand tonnes of poultry were consumed (CSO, 2015a). For the meat industry in Poland, as in other European countries, it will be a challenge to

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