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Review

Consumer perception and the role of science in the meat industry

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Abstract

The relationship between consumer perception of quality and the food industry's drive to satisfy consumer needs is complex and involves many different components. Science and innovation play a major role in equipping the industry to respond to consumer concerns and expectations.

This paper examines the main elements of consumer perception of meat with focus on the red meat sector. Emphasis is placed on perception at point of sale particularly the intrinsic quality cues of colour, packaging and degree of visual fat. The state of the art developments in increasing consumers' perception at this point are discussed.

Experienced quality cues such as tenderness and flavour are well known as being of immense importance to consumers at point of consumption. The latest technological developments to enhance the quality experienced by consumers are discussed. The use of pre-rigor restraining techniques offers the industry a method for changing its

conventional procedures of processing beef for instance. Background cues of safety, nutrition, animal welfare and sustainability are also discussed.

Finally opportunities and challenges facing the industry are outlined. It is concluded that the meat industry needs to invest in and embrace an innovation agenda in order to be sustainable. It must utilise emerging scientific knowledge and take a more proactive role in setting out a research agenda.



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Keywords

Meat; Quality; Consumer; Colour; Tenderness; Industry

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