

# Consumer's Quality Preferences for Different Types of Meat Purchased in Ampara District

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## INTRODUCTION

The changes in taste and lifestyle engendered by urban living are likely to have significant influence on food consumption patterns, especially livestock products. In Sri Lanka, per capita availability of beef, mutton, pork and chicken is respectively 1.12, 0.07, 0.08 and 4.86 kilograms per year (Department of Animal Production and Health, 2010). Ampara District is one of the coastal districts in Sri Lanka, where livestock production is a major occupation next to paddy farming and where large quantities of livestock products are consumed. Consumer needs are very few, but their preferences are more, so the commercial meat producing organization should cater to the needs and preferences of consumers (Chamburi and Bhatt, 2007). Various external factors, such as marketing to mixed social, cultural, personal and psychological characteristics, economic factors, consumer preference, and certain situational determinants also influence the consumer's purchasing decisions (Raghavendra, 2007).

## METHODOLOGY

A study was conducted during January and February, 2011 to determine the meat marketing and consumption in coastal areas of Ampara district. The survey covered 100 meat consumers from four Divisional Secretariat Divisions (Kalmunai, Karaitivu,

Addalaichenai, and Akkaraipattu) of coastal areas of the Ampara District. Random sampling method was used in the consumer survey. The data which was collected at the rural markets were analyzed by using SPSS package. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, use of a five point Likert Scale and a multiple regression analysis were done.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The amount of different types of meat by households per month differed significantly for beef and mutton, while it was insignificant for chicken meat. See Table 1 for LSD (Least Significance Difference) results.

**Table 1: Amount of Different Types of Meat Purchased Monthly (Kgms/mth)**

Divisional Secretariat Division	Beef	Mutton	Chicken
Kalmunai	4.6 <sup>a</sup>	1.1 <sup>a</sup>	4.5 <sup>a</sup>
Karativu	6.2 <sup>b</sup>	1.3 <sup>ab</sup>	4.7 <sup>a</sup>
Addalaichenai	6.4 <sup>b</sup>	0.8 <sup>a</sup>	3.8 <sup>a</sup>
Akkaraipattu	5.7 <sup>ab</sup>	1.8 <sup>b</sup>	4.5 <sup>a</sup>

*Source: Survey data (2011), P is at level of 5% ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).*

*LSD: Same letter indicates no significant difference between the values.*

The LSD analysis shows that the amount of beef purchased by each household per month was significantly different ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) between Kalmunai and Karativu, Addalachenai Akkaraipattu Divisional Secretariat Divisions while the amount of mutton purchased was significantly different ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) between Addalaichenai and Akkaraipattu, Karativu, Kalmunai Divisional Secretariat Divisions. The survey results revealed that all the consumers considered quality of meat in their decision to purchase meat. Most of the consumers

(92%) considered meat quality for their good health and to prevent diseases. Few of them (13%) considered meat quality for ease of cooking. About 34% of consumers considered quality for taste of meat. Consumers were willing to pay more to purchase the better quality meat and currently, they have shifted their focus towards quality (Chamhuri et al., 2007).

**Table 2: Consumers Perception of Meat Quality Characters\* (%)**

Carcasses	Beef (N=81)	Mutton (N=83)	Chicken (N=100)	Pork (N=5)
Colour	92.6	75.9	50	60
Smell	35.8	45.8	0	40
Appearance	95.1	95.2	100	100
Tenderness	30.9	36.1	29	40

*Source: Survey data (2013), \* - multiple responses.*

The consumer survey revealed that most of the beef consumers considered appearance and colour as a perceived quality characteristic during purchasing of beef. Some of the beef consumers (31%) considered beef tenderness. Some of them (36%) considered smell because some of the sellers adulterate with buffalo meat. The survey revealed that with mutton, consumers considered appearance (95%) of mutton as a perceived quality characteristic during purchasing of mutton. More than 75% of the mutton consumers considered the colour red in mutton to be a characteristic of as fresh mutton.

Appearance was considered by all consumers during purchasing of chicken. Nobody considered chicken smell as a perceived quality characteristic during the purchasing of chicken meat. Data revealed that appearance was considered by all pork consumers during buying pork. Some of the pork consumers (40%) considered tenderness of pork. Seneviratne, (2004) too observed a similar consumer behavior in his study on chicken meat purchases in Sri Lanka.

**Table 3: Impact of Buyer Characteristics on Purchase Decision**

Trait	Characteristics of buyer	Mean scale value
1. Cultural factor	Religion	4.44
2. Social factors	Family size	3.06
	Quantity of purchasing	3.23
3. Psychological factors	Preference	4.53
	Health	3.38
4. Economic Factors	Family income	3.19
	Price	3.48

*Source: Survey data (2013)*

The analysis showed that the mean Likert Scale value of buyer characteristics, cultural factors (religion) had high levels of impact on purchase decisions. Social factors such as family size and quantity of purchasing had moderate impact on purchasing decision of fresh meat. Psychological factors (preference and health) had a higher impact, but health concerns had a moderate impact on purchase decision. Economic factors such as family income and price of meat had moderate impact on purchase decision of fresh meat. De Silva et al. (2010) also obtained similar results in a study on meat consumption in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka.

## CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The quantity of beef and mutton purchased by consumer's differed significantly, but chicken purchases were not significantly different among the Divisional Secretariat area studied. It was evident from the study that consumers mostly looked into meat quality characteristics such as colour and appearance during purchases. Buyer's socio-economic characteristics such as cultural background- religion and psychological factors namely preferences for a meat type and health

consciousness had impacts on the decision making process to buy meat for consumption. Hence, marketing strategies should be geared to supply meat products to satisfy consumer preferences in meat colour and health aspects, i.e., high fat content.

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