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Internalisation of farm animal welfare in consumers' purchasing decisions: A study of pork fillet at point of purchase using the means-end chain and laddering approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how farm animal welfare (FAW) is internalised in consumers' purchasing decisions at the point of purchase. The study is based on means-end chain theory and the laddering interview technique to elicit respondents' mental representation of attributes, consequences and values of an animal food product. Respondents were approached and interviewed at the point of purchase in two supermarkets in Uppsala, Sweden. A summary representation of respondents' mental representation of attributes, consequences and values of an animal food product (pork fillet) was created. The findings indicate that FAW is the most salient means-end-chain element. FAW enters respondents' mental representation of pork fillet at the point of purchase as a consequence of other elements. FAW is considered to lead to values of hedonism and universalism type. This study contributes to the literature by detailing how animal welfare can be embedded in consumers' mental representation of cause and effect of animal food product attributes at the point of purchase. The findings are useful practically for policy-makers and for agri-business and other actors in the food value chain who would like to promote enhanced FAW. The findings also provide insight into how FAW can be promoted through market-based solutions.

Keywords: animal welfare, consumers, laddering, means-end chain, pork fillet, Sweden