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Perception and Preference of Individual Meat Parts of Pork by Czech Consumers

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Abstract

The paper is focussed on the perception and preference of pork, its individual meat parts (loin, neck, ham, belly, shoulder and knuckle of pork) and on the purchasing behaviour of the Czech consumers. Primary data was acquired by means of questionnaires and the research carried out at the beginning of 2002 included 151 respondents. All meat parts such as loin, neck, ham, belly, shoulder and knuckle of pork are according to consumers available in the Czech shops and some of them are too expensive (ham, loin). The neck, belly and knuckle of pork were perceived as soft after preparation and at the same time fat. A nice appearance was positively evaluated in the loin, ham and shoulder of pork which are less fat. It is evident that in most cases consumers evaluate better the qualities such as lower content of fat and greater softness after the preparation. Associated with it is also the evaluation of convenience in use and a nice appearance. This proves the appropriateness of breeding of slaughter pigs for a higher share of lean meat.

Key words: meat, pork, meat parts, perception, preference, consumer, Czech Republic

1. Introduction

Consumption of pork has been ranging in the long run in the Czech Republic around 50 % of the annual meat consumption per head which is at present 82 kg. The change of the lifestyle of the population of the Czech Republic has recently logically brought also changes in the structure of the consumed foodstuffs and in a higher demand for their quality. Huang and Fu (1995) point out that producers, manufacturers and managers in the marketing sphere of the sale of meat have to know the needs and wishes of their customers. Without this knowledge it is impossible to ensure a high standard of the meat market. The knowledge of consumers' perception and preference not only of individual meats but also of meat parts of the food market is of decisive importance for producers, manufacturers and traders in order to allow them ensure a quality market offer within the current globalisation of the food market (Dam, 1997, Pipek, Pour, 1998, Pourová et al., 2001, Vrchlabský, 2001).

The aim of this paper is to find out on the basis of a questionnaire survey how the Czech consumers perceive pork and its main meat parts (loin, neck, ham, belly, shoulder, knuckle of pork).

2. Material and Methods

At the beginning of 2002 on the basis of a questionnaire survey of 151 respondents an analysis was made of information about consumer perception and preference of six meat parts of pork (loin, neck, ham, belly, shoulder and knuckle of pork). In total 260 questionnaires were distributed, the rate of return was 62,7 % (163 questionnaires) and usability 58 % (151 questionnaires). A study was carried out of the relations between the frequency of pork consuming by the respondents and their sex, net monthly income and residence. In individual meat parts of pork an analysis was made of the respondents' perception of the following attributes: fat, availability in shops, price, savouriness, consistency, attractiveness and suitability for preparation of meals. The results were processed by means of regular statistic methods.

3. Results and Discussion

Pork has an irreplaceable position in the Czech cuisine due to a tradition and its culinary qualities. At present the annual consumption of pork ranges around 40 kg per head. 57 % of respondents have stated that they consume pork minimally once a week (Table 1). Three to five times a week pork is consumed by 13,2 % of respondents. 27,2 % of respondents eat pork once to three times a month.

Table 1 Frequency of pork consuming

Frequency of consuming	Relative frequency (%)
3 - 5times a week	13.2
1 - 2times a week	57.0
1 - 3times per month	27.2
Once in half a year	2.6
Total	100.0

Table 2 Relation between the frequency of pork consuming and sex

Frequency of consuming	Relative frequency (%)	
	Women	Men
3 - 5times a week	10.3	23.5
1 - 2times a week	55.6	64.7
1 - 3times per month	32.5	8.9
Once in half a year	1.7	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Men consume pork more frequently than women (Table 2). 23,5 % of men consume pork three to five times a week and 64,7 % of them minimally once a week. On the opposite, 10,3 % of women eat pork minimally three times a week, 55,6 % of them minimally once a week and 32,5 % of women consume pork at least once a month.

Table 3 shows that the frequency of pork consumption increases with the higher average net monthly income per a member of the household, however, in the highest income group pork consumption decreases. The reason for it may be a preference of other meats by respondents with high income.

Table 3 Relation between the frequency of pork consuming and the average net monthly income per a member of the household

Frequency of consuming	Monthly income in CZK - Relative frequency (%)			
	1000-5000	5001-10000	10001-15000	15001 and more
3 - 5 times a week	19.2	9.3	17.6	0.0
1 - 2 times a week	48.1	61.3	58.8	71.4
1 - 3 times per month	25.0	29.4	23.6	28.6
Once in half a year	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4 Relation between the frequency of pork consuming and the residence of respondents

Frequency of consuming	Residence of respondents - Relative frequency (%)		
	Prague	Town	Village
3 - 5 times a week	11.1	13.2	20.0
1 - 2 times a week	60.0	54.9	60.0
1 - 3 times per month	26.7	28.6	20.0
Once in half a year	2.2	3.3	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4 shows that the respondents from rural area eat pork more frequently than the respondents living in cities or directly in Prague. It may be the result of home slaughtering of pigs, the possibility of keeping their own meat products at home and preparation and eating meals at home. In Prague and in larger cities respondents during the working week prefer more to eat in canteens, restaurants and fast food facilities than respondents in the village.

Table 5 Perception of individual meat parts of pork by the Czech consumers

Meat parts	Factor						
	Fat	Availability	Price	Nice to eat	Consistency	Appearance	For special dish
Loin	3.6	4.3	1.7	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.2
Neck	2.4	4.2	1.9	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.8
Ham	3.7	4.3	1.7	4.1	3.6	4.0	4.1
Belly	1.6	4.1	2.4	3.1	3.9	2.7	2.5
Shoulder	3.3	4.2	1.8	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.9
Knuckle	2.1	3.9	2.4	3.6	3.5	2.8	2.4

1-fat 1-less available 1-expensive 1-not very 1-tough 1- not very attractive 1-not
5-less fat 5-available 5-cheap savour 5-soft 5- attractive very suitable
5-savour 5- suitable

Table 5 shows a comprehensive overview of the perception of six main meat parts of pork by respondents. Each observed meat part was assessed from the viewpoint of attributes such as fat, availability in shops, price, savouriness, consistency, attractiveness and suitability for preparation of meals. Table 5 indicates that all meat parts such as loin, neck, ham, belly, shoulder and knuckle of pork are according to consumers available in the Czech shops and some of them are too expensive (ham, loin). The neck, belly and knuckle of pork

were perceived as soft after preparation and at the same time fat. A nice appearance was positively evaluated in the loin, ham and shoulder of pork which are less fat. It is evident that in most cases consumers evaluate better the qualities such as lower content of fat and greater softness after the preparation. Associated with it is also the evaluation of convenience in use (for special dish) and a nice appearance. This proves the appropriateness of breeding of slaughter pigs for a higher share of lean meat. This fact may in future change the consumers' opinions on the pork and improve its perception in terms of healthiness and fatness. However, this cannot be claimed for certain, as many consumers, mainly the older ones, prefer the meat parts which are more fat and therefore also more tasty for these consumers.

4. Conclusions

The research has shown that in the Czech Republic pork ranks as the second meat from the viewpoint of consuming, following poultry. Beef is according to the results preferred less which may be associated mainly with the fear of the transmission of BSE and also with a high consumer price of beef. Consuming of pork is more preferred by men who perceive it as a more healthy and fat than women do. Pork is preferred more often by the respondents with a higher net income per member of the household (10001–15000 CZK). In the families with the income above 15000 CZK the preference of pork decreases. Further, the research has shown that pork is consumed most frequently once or twice a week and more often by men than by women.

At present it is the quality which is very important for consumers and therefore it should be preferred in the retail chains. Offering of a meat of high quality is the only way how to win success on the part of customers. The most preferred place for the purchase of pork are hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialised shops.

The research of the perception of pork and its meat parts by consumers is an important source of marketing information for the producers of slaughter pigs, for manufacturers and commercial sphere.

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