

Effect of information about organic production on beef acceptability

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In this study the preference for two products, organic (OB) and conventional beef (CB), and the effect of information about the farming system on meat acceptability was assessed. Products were obtained from the muscle *Longissimus dorsi* of Podolian young bulls. The consumer panel consisted of 95 subjects. In the first test the consumers were offered both OB and CB. They were asked to rate their liking receiving no information on the products (blind condition). In the second test the subjects received only the information concerning the farming systems and gave their liking expectations for both products. In the third test consumers were given only OB along with the information and rated their actual liking. Consumers expressed their liking by rating the products on a 9-point hedonic scale. For both products the expectancy was significantly different from the liking expressed in blind conditions ($P < 0.001$), thus indicating that a disconfirmation occurred. The consumers found OB worse than expected (6.99 ± 0.14 vs. 7.70 ± 0.11 , $P < 0.001$, negative disconfirmation), whereas CB was considered better than expected (6.22 ± 0.14 vs. 5.49 ± 0.17 , $P < 0.001$, positive disconfirmation). These results indicate that information about organic production can have a marked impact on consumer expectancy with organic standards associated with high expected product quality. The information given about organic production had a positive impact on actual liking of beef (7.59 ± 0.10). The effect of information can be explained on the basis of the assimilation model, which can be observed when the actual liking of the product moves in the direction of the expectations. Consumers completely assimilated their liking in the direction of expectations, as indicated by the fact that expectancy for OB was not significantly different from actual liking ($P > 0.05$). Thus, information about organic production can be a major determinant of beef acceptability, also providing a potential tool for product differentiation to traditional farms.