

AGRICULTURE

What Determines Urban Chinese Consumers' Choice of Shopping Outlets for Pork?

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Pork is the major meat in the Chinese diet, which is highly relevant to U.S. agricultural export. With rising concerns for domestic food safety, Chinese urban consumers now have the choice of consuming imported pork as it becomes available. Among several types of retail outlets, including wet markets, meat stores, and supermarkets, imported pork is most likely sold in supermarkets because of their supply channels. The purpose of this study is to determine which factors influence urban Chinese consumers' decisions in choosing pork shopping outlets. Although there are several studies examining factors effecting grocery shopping outlet choices in China, no study has focused on pork specifically. We conducted an in-person interview survey among random shoppers in Guangzhou, China, in July 2014. Questions about demographic information, pork shopping habits, store access convenience, and food safety concerns were asked. Using a Multinomial Logit Regression model, the marginal effect of each factor was calculated, that is, the change in the probability of choosing a specific shopping outlet brought by one unit increase in that factor. The results showed that if a shopper perceives that he or she is likely to get sick from eating domestic pork, then that shopper has a 14.9% higher probability of shopping in a supermarket. On the other hand, if the shopper thinks he or she is likely to get sick from eating pork bought in the supermarket, then that shopper is 1.4% more likely to shop elsewhere. The store access convenience measured

by travel time does not affect the choice of shopping outlets. This is because the geographic distribution of all types of stores together with the transportation services, such as free shuttles provided by supermarkets, make it similarly convenient to those we surveyed. We conclude that urban Chinese pork consumers' lack of confidence towards domestic pork is the most influential factor that causes them to purchase pork in supermarkets, while the concern for pork safety in supermarkets is the most important reason keeping them away from supermarkets.

Research advisor Hong Holly Wang writes, "The growing Chinese urban middle class shows strong purchasing power for imported high-quality foods. Their choice of food retail outlets has an important impact on whether they can access such foods. Based on a 2014 consumer survey in Guangzhou, China, conducted by a Purdue team including the author, Wuzheqian Xiao, studied factors influencing consumers' choice of grocery shopping outlets and derived interesting results."



Chilled packaged pork sold in a supermarket in China.

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