

Consumer Awareness and Acceptance of Insect-Based Food and Feed in Sri Lanka

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This study aimed to evaluate the consumer awareness and acceptance of insect-based food and feed in Sri Lanka, and to determine whether the acceptance can be increased by provision of information. A web-based survey was conducted with 1059 participants to determine consumer awareness and acceptance. Among the participants, 93%, 43% and 33% were aware of insect-based food, feed and pet food, respectively. The probability of being aware of insect-based food was significantly ($P<0.05$) lower among males than among females. The probability of being insects aware of insect-based feed was significantly ($P<0.05$) higher among people aged 18-30 years than among people aged below 18 years. A majority (75%) of participants in the survey were willing to eat insect-based food or food produced from animals fed with, where a majority of them was willing to eat insects-fed chicken eggs. Acceptance of insect-based food and feed among males was significantly ($P<0.05$) high compared to that among females, and low among Hindus compared to Buddhists. A paper-based survey was conducted (using 210 third-year undergraduate students) to evaluate whether the provision of information could change the level of acceptance. The participants were randomly assigned to 3 groups ($n=70$): the control group (no information), group provided with information via a leaflet, and group provided with information via a video. The acceptance of insects-based food was significantly ($P<0.1$) high in the video group compared to the control group, whereas there was no difference between leaflet and control groups. The acceptance of insects-based feed and pet food was not affected by the information provided. In conclusion, there is a potential to use insects as a food and feed source in Sri Lanka, and consumer acceptance of insect-based food can be increased by provision of information via video.

Keywords: Consumer acceptance, Consumer awareness, Insect-based feed, Insect-based food, Pet food

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