

FOOD TRACEABILITY: HOW DO CONSUMERS USE IT TO ASSESS QUALITY AND SAFETY?

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Abstract

Traceability is becoming an important instrument to ensure consumer confidence. Why traceability is so important? Is it contributed towards increasing consumer confidence in food quality and safety? To know about how consumers play crucial roles and potential impact of traceability within the food supply chain. This paper therefore provides insight into how traceability information can offer guarantees of food quality and safety, and how consumers use it to assess quality and safety to make choices to purchase food products. Data were collected from a sample of 566 consumers in China who were questioned about their cognitions, attitudes and purchasing behaviours associated with traceability related attributes. Findings reveal that traceability related food attributes such as health, quality, and safety which may reduce information asymmetry with respect to credence attribute and increase consumer confidence. Further, consumers make choices to purchase food products which maximize their well-being with full information about food product attributes, so it is important for consumer to understand benefits link with relationship of traceability and food quality and safety which will assist in providing consumers with traceability information according to their special needs. Besides, the consumers leverage trusted sources of information, they have the command for transparency by delivering credible information about food product and effective communication with in more complex food supply chain to guide their purchasing behaviours.

Key words: Traceability, Food Quality and Safety, Information Asymmetry, Supply Chain, Purchase Behaviour,

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