

## Consumer preferences for sheep meat in the Tiaret region of Algeria

Hafidh Zemour<sup>1</sup>, Mohamed Sadoud<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khadoun University of Tiaret, Route d'Alger, Tiaret, Algeria

<sup>2</sup> University H. Benbouali de Chlef, Chlef, Algeria

**Introduction:** Sheep farming occupies a strategic place in Algeria's agricultural economy, because of its economic weight and its implications and impacts in terms of production systems on employment and the environment. The sheep population of the Tiaret region is made up of the local breed "Rumbi, considered the heaviest Algerian sheep breed, with weights of around 90 kg for the ram. This article aims to analyze consumer preferences for sheepmeat.

**Materials and methods:** The investigation took place during the year 2020. This survey is essentially based on a questionnaire given to consumers through social networks such as Facebook. We have received 126 responses since containment. It was structured into different themes concerning the characteristics of families (household size, family situation, level of education, income, frequency of purchase), and of meat (cut, color, smell, taste, juiciness) and the pieces consumed. The survey made it possible to take stock of their preferences. The study was carried out in an Algerian region with a tradition of sheep breeding and a tradition of consuming meat of this species.

**Results and discussion:** The household age variable divides the sample into four categories. Income is an important variable in determining meat consumption since it determines the purchasing power of consumers. For 57.6% of respondents, the price negatively affects the purchase of meat or an individual's eating habits, while for 42.4% of households, the price does not negatively affect the purchase of meat. Price is the most important factor and may be the main reason for the change in consumption habits in the region. About 48% of respondents buy sheep meat once a week, while 39% buy meat once a month. On the other hand, 13.0% buy it between 2 and 4 times a week. The place of supply is sometimes seen as synonymous with quality assurance or confidence for buyers of sheep meat. However, 37.1% prefer the dark red color of the meat because it determines the quality of the meat, 31.1% are indifferent to the color, while 29.8% of respondents are oriented towards meat from light red color. In our study, 61.1% of respondents consider odor to be a very important factor, and 38.1% consider it to be only an important factor. On the other hand, the remaining 1% consider that odor is not an important factor. In our study, 56.5% of respondents say that juiciness is a very important factor, while 24.5% consider it a factor that is not important and 38.7% consider it to be an important factor. and 4.8% as not important (figure). Thus, in our survey, 54.8% of consumers consider freshness to be a very important factor, while "37.9% consider it only important, and 7.3% consider that it is not important. It was found that 42.7% of consumers in our sample consider that cholesterol is not at all important to them, while 30.6% of individuals say that cholesterol is considered to be only an important and only factor. 26.6% of consumers consider cholesterol to be a very important factor.

**Conclusion:** Local consumption habits are the main determinants of sheep meat consumption in the Algerian region studied. Consumer preferences are very complex and heterogeneous and depend not only on the sensory properties of the meat, but also on psychological and socio-demographic factors. Our results show that color, tenderness, flavor and price are the most important criteria for consumers. The results of our study also indicate a great consume