

ANALYSIS OF MEAT CONSUMPTION PREFERENCES OF CONSUMERS FROM TIMIS COUNTY

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Abstract: An important role in modern man's diet of is played by meat from mammals and birds, cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, broilers, but also the edible organs, resulting from processing, which, for the human body, bring important nutrients for a good functioning but also to maintain health depending on the effort made in daily activity, in this sense a study was undertaken at the level of Timis County, with the aim of determining the reason for the lack of meat and meat products, determining the type of meat preferred by consumers depending on the species of origin, establishing the frequency of meat consumption and determining consumer preferences for the way meat is presented.

Key words: meat, consumption, Timis County.

INTRODUCTION

Food in recent years has become an increasingly acute problem so that it has taken on new features and also new dimensions in terms of quality, so that it has become over time a global problem from a local or national one [2,8,14]. The need to analyse this vast area of consumption can also be highlighted by listing its multiple functions in society, and by studying these functions it is possible to highlight the ultimate objective of consumption, i.e. to raise the standard of living of the population and increase the quality of life, which is not the case for the consumption of all categories of products, because it is natural that any person or community should be able to seek prosperity and freedom in terms of material or immaterial consumption [3,10].

Knowing people's consumption needs makes it possible to anticipate future market reactions, because production, entrepreneurs' actions and their decisions are based on consumers' needs and, above all, their preferences [1,6,16]. It is very important to highlight certain aspects related to the study of people's consumption, especially the way in which they try to satisfy their food consumption needs, and Acknowledging these aspects is a very important source of information, because the individual who is taken as an entity does not act even once under the impuls of a single need, but as a multitude of needs that are combined, prioritised and structured [7,15].

The purchasing behaviour of products in general and agri-food products in particular, presents several particularities compared to the purchasing behaviour manifested towards other consumption categories, so that some of these particular aspects are specific to all categories of households, not being influenced by social-demographic and economic characteristics, but on the other hand, depending on the characteristics mentioned, a multitude of characteristics of the purchasing behaviour and consumption of agri-food products can be noted, as follows [4,9,11,13]:

- characteristics such as: age, gender, religion, living environment, social status, income, marital status,
- household categories,
- household group,
- the size of the household to which the individual belongs and, by implication, the presence of children in the household, all of which are the main criteria for segmenting the agri-food market.

Today we can see from market studies that more and more mammal and poultry meat dishes are being consumed, because it often no longer require a certain amount of prior preparation being easy to obtain from large commercial chains and immediately ready for consumption [5,12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Studies carried out over time highlight the close relationship created between nutrition - physiological state - consumption needs, so that the weight is assessed taking into account the energy and protein needs of different foods, so that there is a balanced food ration. These food rations are differentiated by geographical area and are directly related to the level of economic development of the areas given, to their conditions and, above all, to the tradition of consumption of the population living there.

The main purpose of this scientific approach was to evaluate the eating behaviour, to determine the preferences and attitudes of consumers and their knowledge about meat and meat products on the market in Timis County.

The objectives of this scientific approach, based on questionnaires, were the following:

- to determine the reason for not preferring meat and meat products, in the case of those who said they did not prefer these products;
- to determine the type of meat preferred by consumers according to the species of origin;
- determining the frequency of meat consumption;
- to determine consumers' preferences for the way meat is presented (re-packaged, frozen, semi-prepared);

The meat and meat products market in Timis County is structured on two main branches, depending on the area: rural and urban meat market, so the rural market can be viewed from several directions, presenting several characteristics: small size of the economic agents where meat and meat products are sold, important changes in food consumption traditions and habits, thus generating changes in the supply of meat producers, the meat industry in rural areas includes small and medium-sized farms but also private producers, so that products can also be sold directly from households. The urban meat market is much better developed and can be represented by food markets in the county's towns, supermarkets or specialised producers' shops and/or other food shops.

Because we are talking about the market of meat and meat products in rural and urban areas, we decided to apply the questionnaires in three urban and three rural areas in order to determine both similarities and differences in consumption of these products, in this respect we used a food frequency questionnaire containing 3 questions related to factual data and 5 concrete questions related to the consumption of meat and meat products.

In order to establish the sample, we analysed the populations of the localities surveyed, so that the questionnaire was applied to 1311 people.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This research took in consideration meat and meat products, both chilled and frozen or industrially processed.

In order to analyse the consumption of meat and meat products in Timis County, the data were structured in the form of tables and graphs, which showed the absolute and relative frequency of the responses received from the sample of 1311 people.

The first three questions of the questionnaire referred to factual data:

The first question aimed to determine the age group of the respondents (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1.

Age ranges	Answers	
	Number of respondents	Share (%)
15-20 years	166	12,68
21-30 years	311	23,69
31-40 years	500	38,04
41-50 years	116	8,88
51-60 years	197	15,04
More than 60 years	21	1,67

Most of the people surveyed are in the 31-40 age group namely a percentage of 38.04%.

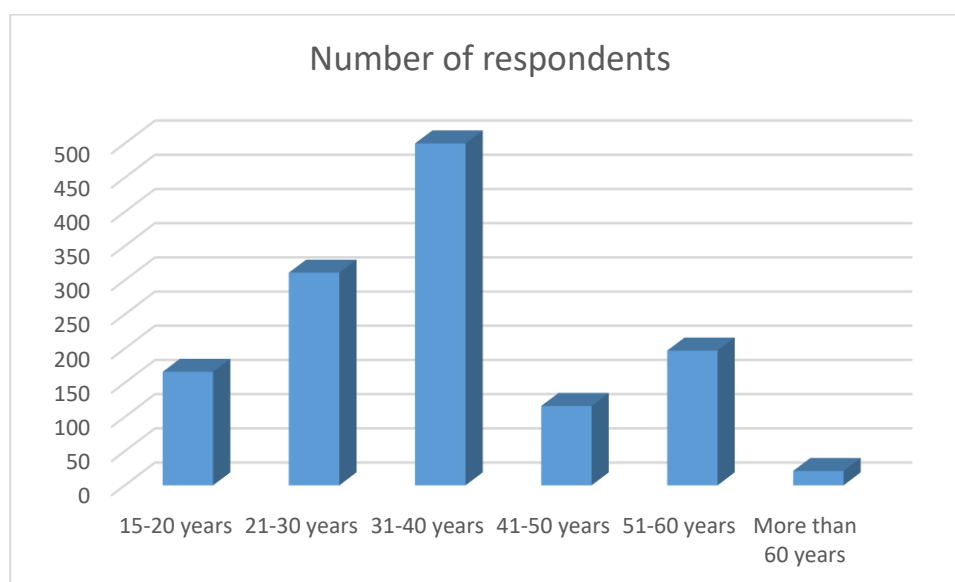


Figure 1. Age group of respondents

In order to determine the number of consumers according to their gender, it was found that 61.58% were women, which is also explained by the fact that the questionnaires were applied in front of shops and most of the time women are the ones who supply the families with the necessary items.

Table 2.

Sex	Answer	
	Number of respondents	Share (%)
Male	503	38,42
Female	808	61,58

Because we wanted to find out what differences or similarities are found in consumer preferences according to the environment of origin, the third factual question was asked, according to which 56.56% of all respondents live in one of the three cities of Timis County taken into consideration in the study (Table 3).

Table 3.

Number of consumers according to their place of origin

The environment	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Number of respondents	Share (%)	Number of respondents	Share (%)
Urban	265	52,57	478	59,06
Rural	238	47,43	330	40,94

For both men and women, the highest percentage comes from urban areas, so 52.57% of men live in the city and 59.05% of women who completed the questionnaires live in urban areas.

After processing the factual data, the general consumption data were processed. For this purpose 5 questions were asked, the first of which was mentioned in order to determine consumption and non-consumption of meat and meat products (table 4. and figure 2).

Table 4.

Determination of preference for meat and meat products

Consumption	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Yes	255	237	486	327
No	11	3	13	5

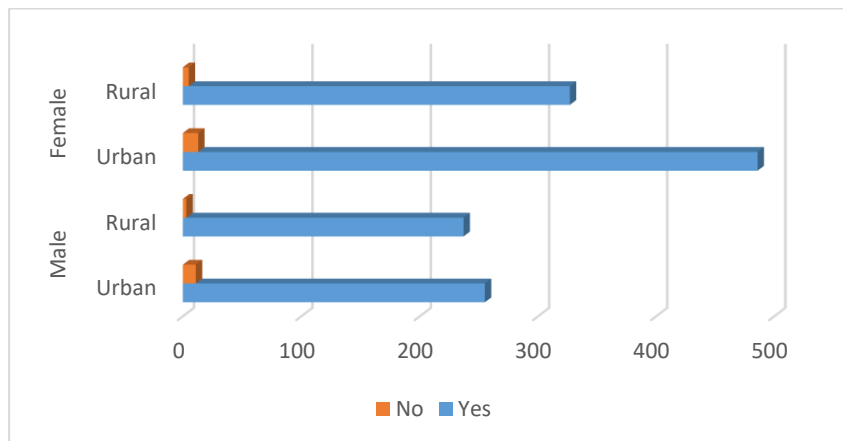


Figure 2. Determination of preference for meat and meat products consumption

Only 2.43% of those surveyed said they do not eat meat and meat products, 2.77% of men do not eat meat and meat products and 2.22% of women do not eat meat and meat products.

Those who answered negatively were asked to answer only one more question to determine their non-consumption of meat and meat products (Table 5. and Figure 3).

Table 5.

Reason for not consuming meat and meat products

Factors	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Medical reasons	71	112	289	177
Religion	11	7	28	39
Lifestyle (vegetarian or lacto-ovo-vegetarian)	103	88	106	99
Other reasons	69	28	42	10

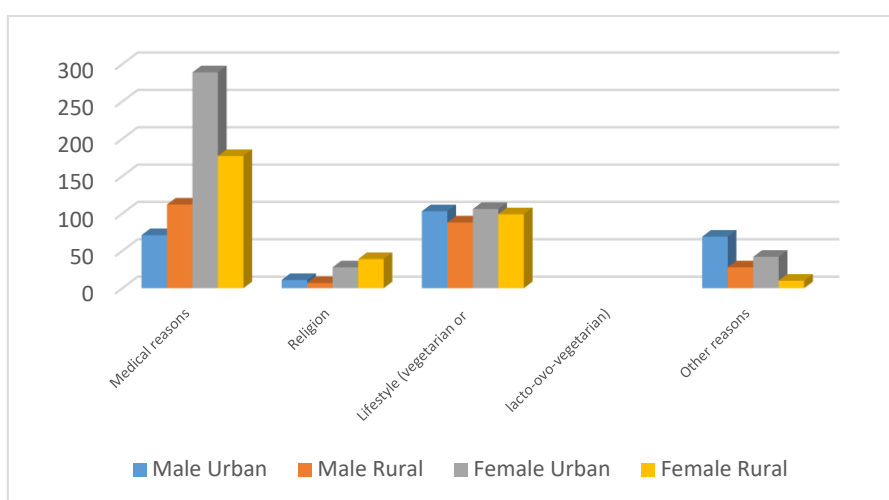


Figure 3. Reason for not consuming meat and meat products

In the case of male respondents, 37.2% of them gave medical reasons, 38.82% said that lifestyle was a reason for not eating meat or meat products and only 3.66% gave religion as a reason for not eating meat. As for women, the vast majority 58.76% stated that they do not consume this type of products for medical reasons, 25.85% of them said they were vegetarian or lacto-ovo-vegetarian, 8.45% mentioned religion.

Consumers prefer to consume meat especially considering the species of origin, because there are many people who do not eat sheep meat, beef or other types of meat at all, that is why the following question was asked (table 6. and figure 4.).

Table 6.

Type of meat preferred by species of origin

Type of meat	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Pork	99	77	103	126
Beef	67	32	58	39
Sheep meat	11	26	45	22
Poultry meat	75	98	214	127
Other type of meat	2	2	45	11

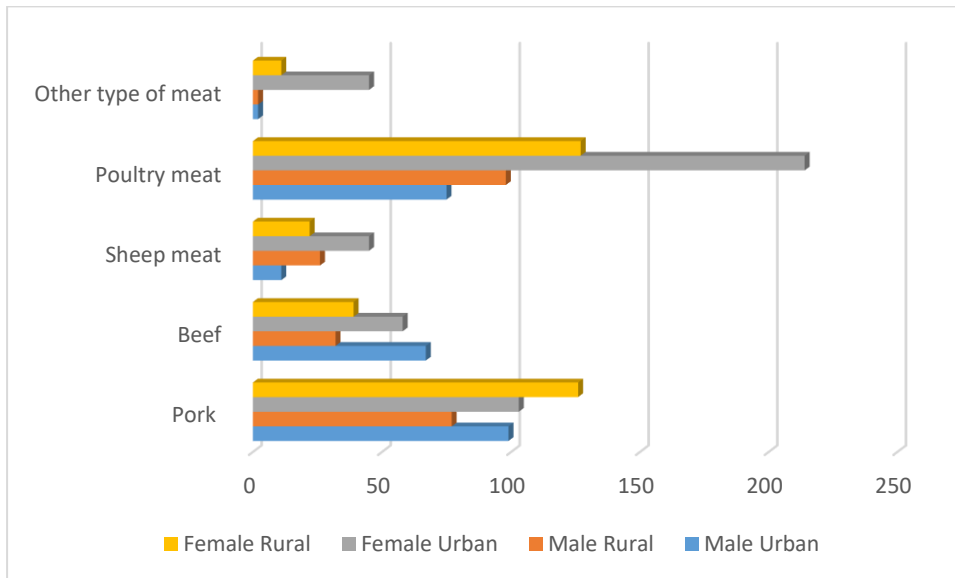


Figure 4. Type of meat preferred by species of origin by sex

In the case of men most of them prefer pork, 35.77% of them and in a very close percentage of 35.16% prefer poultry meat, 20.12% prefer to consume beef, only 7.53% prefer sheep meat. In the case of women, poultry meat is preferred by a very high percentage of respondents, 43%, followed by pork with 28.74%, then beef 12.13%, mutton 8.73%.

Table 7. and Figure 5 show the data on frequency of meat consumption.

Table 7.

Frequency of meat consumption

Frequency	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Urban	Urban	Urban	Rural
Daily	78	89	109	90
Twice/week	102	58	87	117
Weekly	53	36	113	35
Twice a month	16	44	95	58
Monthly	5	8	60	26

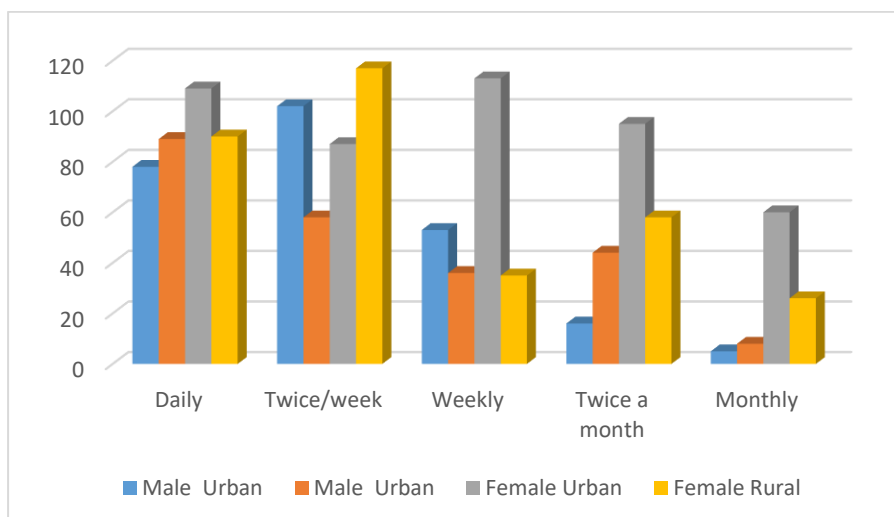


Figure 5. Frequency of meat consumption by sex of respondents

Out of the total number of men surveyed the highest percentage 33.94% of them consume meat daily, 32.52% consume meat twice a week, 18.09% consume meat once a week, 12.04% twice a month and only 3.05% of men consume meat only once a month. In the case of women the highest percentage 25.73% of them consume meat twice a week, 25.09% of women eat meat daily, 19.42% of them consume twice a month, 18.66% consume meat weekly and 11.10% mentioned that they consume meat monthly.

The next question was asked to see how they prefer meat at the time of purchase (Table 8. and Figure 6.).

Table 8.

Preference of meat purchase according to its condition

Item	Answer			
	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Refrigerated	102	111	183	133
Frozen	67	68	99	86
Semi-prepared	52	54	113	67
Other forms	32	3	70	39

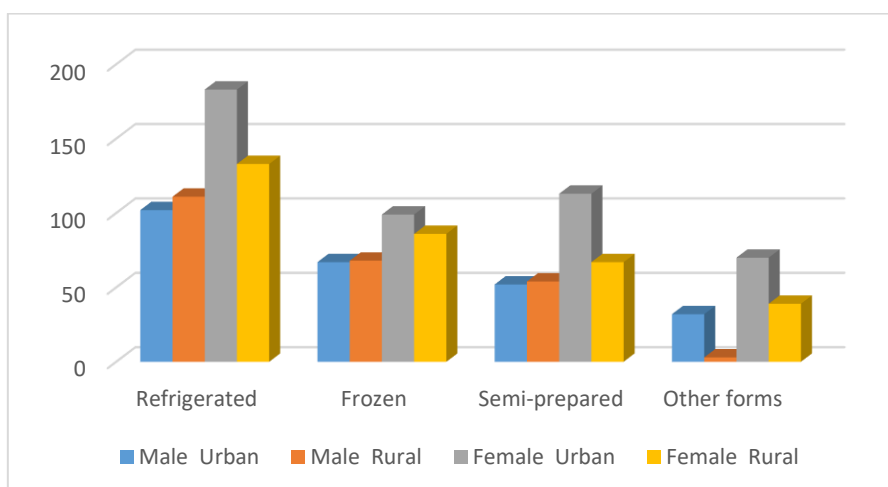


Figure 6. Preference for purchasing meat according to its quality

43.29% of men prefer to buy refrigerated meat, 27.44% prefer frozen meat, 21.54% even buy semi-prepared meat, the situation is similar for women, meaning 39.85% of them prefer to buy refrigerated meat, 23.33% prefer frozen meat, 22.7% prefer semi-prepared meat and 14.12% buy meat in other forms.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysing the answer to the first question, it was found that out of the total number of respondents, only 2.43% of the respondents stated that they do not consume meat and meat products, respectively 32 people. Among the reasons mentioned by the 2.43% of the respondents who stated that they do not consume meat were in the case of men: medical reasons for 37.2%, lifestyle for 38.82% and 20.32% specified other reasons and in the case of women: 58.76% specified medical reasons, 25.85% declared themselves to be vegetarian or lacto-ovo-vegetarian, 8.45% mentioned religion.

35.77% of the men prefer pork meat and in a very close percentage 35.16% prefer poultry meat, in the case of women 43% prefer poultry meat, 28.74% pork meat, beef 12.13%, sheep meat 98.73%.

43.29% of men prefer to buy refrigerated meat, 27.44% prefer frozen meat, 21.54% even buy meat semi-prepared and in case of women 39.85% of them prefer to buy that refrigerated, 23.33% prefer frozen meat, 22.7% prefer meat semi-prepared.

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