

**Project Title: Consumer's Perception and Attitude towards Mutton Consumption in Peninsular Malaysia.**

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**Abstract**

Consumption patterns for different meats have changed considerably in Malaysia over the last few decades. This development showed that the total amount of meat per capita consumed has grown 57.3% from 1990 to 2003. The highest growths are seen in poultry, mutton and beef, which have increased 99.2%, 78.6% and 57.1% from 1990 to 2003 respectively, while the consumption of pork declines by 22.3 %. Among the factors cited for this meat consumption growth are the effects of changing relative prices and rising income, associated changes in dietary patterns, taste and preferences in the country as well as the improvement of the marketing system and the distribution channels. Religion and ethnic background of the population are also important factors influencing meat consumption. Islam, the main religion in Malaysia, prohibits pork consumption, while Indians do not take beef. There is no religion taboo with mutton as it can be consumed by all Malaysians. However, most Malaysian have some reservation in consuming mutton, as it has been associated several health risks, largely due to the saturated fat content of many cuts. Consumers also have some problem in getting mutton in the market and its price is high compare with other red meats. A clear understanding of consumer's needs is important to help the meat industry to be proactive in providing households with a reliable and safe source of protein. Mutton marketers need to know whether consumers hold favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward mutton, and they have to understand the reasons behind these attitudes. The objectives of the research are to analyze consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards mutton consumption and to provide information which is suitable for decision making. The data used in this study were collected using primary data through a structured questionnaire, taste test and observation test from various states in Peninsular Malaysia. The number of respondents involved in this study were 525 respondents. The results of this study imply that the market potential for mutton is bright, but we must view this with caution. The study shows that consumers are more concerned about health issues and nutritional value. They have negative perception towards mutton due to lack of knowledge and the special quality of mutton. Hence, mutton is not as a preferred meat compare to other meats as beef and chicken. This perceptions and attitude become major barrier in mutton consumption and leading to a slow development of mutton industry. Most of the respondents indicated that unavailability and high price of mutton prevented to buy mutton. Thus the consumption of mutton is still low and unsatisfactory. The continuous promotion campaign is important to highlight the nutritional value and quality of mutton and to change consumer's perception towards mutton.