



Attribute differences among poultry and other meat products: A visual representation

L. Martinez Michel, W.V. Wismer

Summary

Personal interviews were used to create a visual representation to identify consumer attributes for discriminating poultry products among other meat products. This representation separated 24 different meat products by “processed/artificial vs. healthy/nutritious” and “healthy/convenient vs. difficult to digest/messy” attributes. This information provides insight into consumer driven product development of value-added chicken products.

Problem

Today, Canadians prefer chicken primarily due to an increase in health awareness and a higher consumer demand for non-red meat products (AAFC, 2006). They also choose chicken for its taste, variety, affordability and convenience (CFC, 2008).

As more people are changing towards chicken, an important question arises: Are they getting what they need?

Understanding consumer perceptions and preferences of food products is vital in any commercial context, such as new product development, product positioning, or marketing (Gains & Thomson, 1990).

In order to design products with better chances of being accepted regardless of the competition, it is important to identify consumer relevant quality attributes and translate consumers’ demands into product specifications that are feasible from the producers’ point of view (Ophuis & Van Trijp, 1995).

Purpose

To determine consumer perceived attribute differences of poultry and other meat products and understand them through a visual representation.

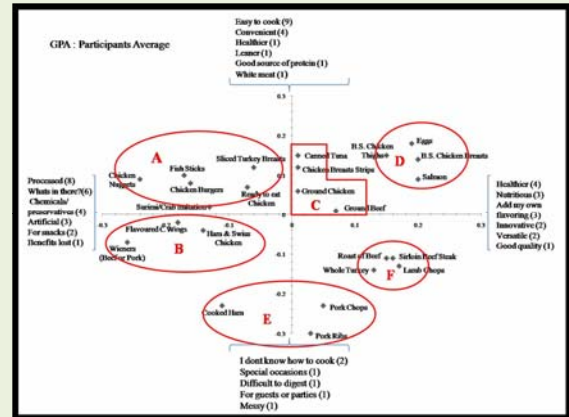
Method

Personal interviews were conducted with 27 participants to elicit product attributes perceived in 24 different meat products. Each participant’s product attributes were obtained by presenting her/him with a total of 12 groups of 3 cards which contained the names of the selected meats. For each group of cards, the participant was asked to compare and contrast the meats by describing in few words how two of the products were similar and different from the third. The participant provided bipolar descriptors (e.g. Cheap-Expensive) which were written down in a form of list. When no new descriptors could be provided a new group of 3 cards was presented and the procedure repeated until all 24 products were compared. Then, each participant rated the 24 meats according to her/his own list of descriptors (attributes)

using a scale where 1=Disagree strongly and 5=Agree strongly.

Data derived from each personal interview were statistically analyzed and combined to generate a visual representation which describes the important product attributes of poultry and other meat products.

Results



Attributes such as “white meat”, “healthier”, “leaner”, “good source of protein”, “easy to cook” and “convenient”, were found to influence consumer preferences for unprocessed chicken products, eggs and salmon. Unprocessed turkey, beef and lamb, although perceived as healthy, were considered “for special occasions” and “difficult to digest”. Composition, processing and quality concerns appeared as important attributes for discriminating breaded/battered or processed fish and poultry products. Pork products were negatively perceived.

Impact

This visual representation of consumer perceived attributes of poultry products, gives insight into how consumers make meat product choices. This can help the Canadian poultry industry develop new products with a better chance of being accepted by consumers..

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Dr. W. Wismer, Dr. M. Betti and Dr. T. Nilsson for their valuable input and the PRC for a Graduate Student Assistantship.

Contact Information

Lorelei Martínez Michel Phone: (780)492-3833
 Email: martnezm@ualberta.ca

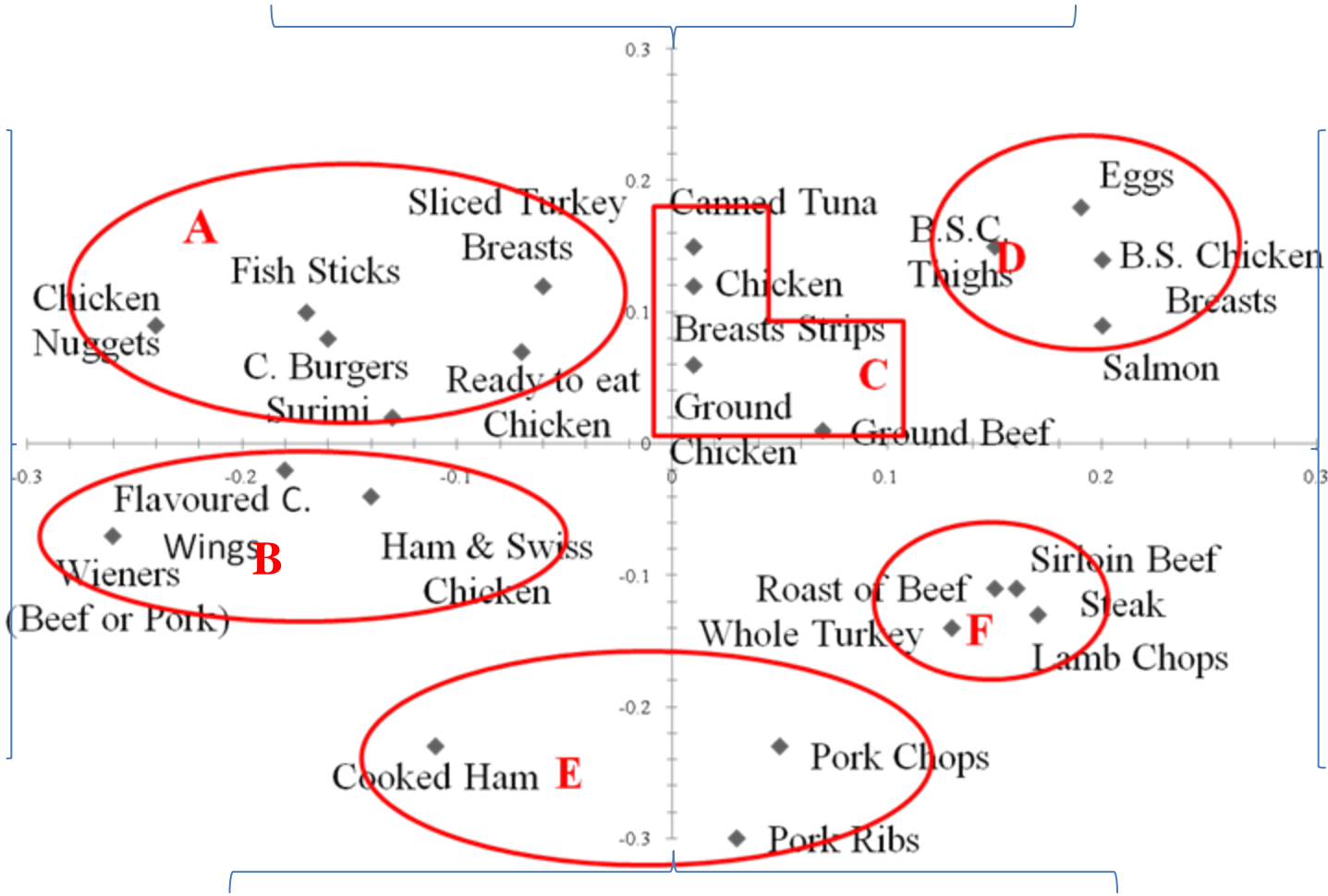
References

- 1) AAFC, 2006 http://www.agr.gc.ca/poultry-prinde6_eng.htm
- 2) CFC, 2008 www.chicken.ca
- 3) Gains & Thomson, 1990. *Inter. J Food Sci and Tech*, 25, 699-705.
- 4) Oude & Van Trijp, 1995. *Food Quality & Preference*, 6(3), 177-183.

Participants Average

Easy to cook (9) Convenient (4)
 Healthier (1) Leaner (1)
 Good source of protein (1)
 White meat (1)

Processed (8)
 Whats in there?(6)
 Chemicals/ preservatives (4)
 Artificial (3)
 For snacks (2)
 Benefits lost (1)



Healthier (4)
 Nutritious (3)
 Add my own flavoring (3)
 Innovative (2)
 Versatile (2)
 Good quality (1)

I dont know how to cook (2) Special occasions (1)
 Difficult to digest (1) For guests or parties (1)
 Messy (1)