

# Study of the functioning of the meat market for consumers in the EU - conclusions

Consumer Markets Expert Group 6 September 2012

**Paulina Gbur** 



#### **Background**

- Monitoring of consumer markets from a consumer perspective in-depth market studies
- Weaker performance of the meat market in the Consumer Markets Scoreboard
- Ranked particularly low for trust that the retailers/suppliers are compliant with the consumer protection rules
- Market highly regulated at the EU and national levels
- 4% of the household budget



#### **Results and conclusions – main areas**



#### Information aspects and availability

- Date label (indicated by 68% of respondents), price per kilogram (67%), price (67%) and the country of origin (48%) are information aspects consumers look for mostly
- Consistent with consumer priorities
- Availability of information checked by mystery shoppers
  ✓ Use by / best before date available for 90% of meat
  - assessed
  - ✓ Price per unit for 92%
  - ✓ Country of origin for 86%
  - ✓ Quality certificate referring to origin for 40%, nutritional value information for 44%, animal welfare information for 20%, nutritional claims for 18% and organic label on 15%
- Information less available in butchers than in hyperand supermarkets



#### **Information sources**

- Labels on the packaging looked at by 68% of EU respondents
- Labels on the shelf 59%
- Staff at the retailer 56%



#### Consumer understanding of information

- Limited understanding of labels and logos
  - 36% of EU respondents indicated correctly the meaning of the best before label
  - 4% knew the meaning of the PDO logo
  - 23% knew the exact meaning of a 'low fat' label
- Cues to assess quality and safety of meat
  - Consumer perceptions often differ from scientific assessments



#### **Communication and education**

- Differences between countries in the use of particular information sources by consumers
- Consumer groups, doctors and scientists most trusted in case of a food risk



#### Meat consumption and health

- Consumers faced with two messages, concerning a positive and a negative impact of meat consumption on health
- Impact of meat on health is important for EU consumers, however their satisfaction with this aspect is not high (36% respondents are satisfied)
- Consumers have a limited interest in nutritional values, limited knowledge of meat with nutritional or health claims (35% of respondents knew it), and they rarely buy this type of meat (15%). However, 31% of respondents would like to buy it more often.



#### **Safety of meat**

- Two in five consumers are convinced that in their country appropriate measures are taken in case of a food risk related to meat (significant differences between countries)
- Consumers are not aware of their role in safe handling of meat



#### **Specific meat types 1**

- Consumer knowledge of specific meat types (e.g. organic or quality certified) often goes in line with their priorities and information aspects they look for when they buy meat
- Meat with specific country of origin, meat with a quality certificate, organic and animal welfare certified are the most known types
- There is a gap between consumer awareness of specific types and their purchases – the biggest one can be observed for organic meat (49% of respondents know it and 16% say they buy it)
- There is a gap between consumer intentions and their behaviour 41% of respondents would like to buy organic meat more often, however only 16% buy it now. For environment/climate certified meat the proportions are 39% and 5%.



#### **Specific meat types 2**

- The main obstacles between consumer intentions and behaviour seem to be: a too high price, insufficient choice or unavailability at the retailer or lack of information
- At the EU level, organic meat is 66% more expensive than regular meat, for animal welfare certified and origin (quality) certified the difference is 20%



#### **Sustainability**

- 23% of respondents threw away edible meat
- Average financial loss 9 EUR per month → over 360 million EUR per month overall in the EU
- Main reasons for waste: the meat was over its durability date, respondents prepared/cooked or purchased too much
- 32% of EU consumers would like to buy meat less often, mainly for health reasons and because meat is too expensive



#### **GMO-free feed**

 Some consumers attach particular importance to the fact whether meat comes from animal fed with GMO-free feed

## Meat from animals slaughtered according to religious rites

Average awareness and interest not high



### Thank you for your attention

paulina.gbur@ec.europa.eu