

# Attitudes and Behaviors of Pork Consumers During COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Introduction/Need

- Consumers faced meat shortages and price spikes during COVID-19 (Attwood & Hajat, 2020).
- Fear of food shortages and lockdowns caused consumers to stockpile protein (Attwood & Hajat, 2020; Hobbs, 2020).
- Purpose – describe consumers' attitudes toward pork consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term consumer protein preferences.

## Conceptual Framework

- Total Food Quality (TFQ) Model examines consumer expectations prior to purchasing a food product and perception of quality which influences future purchases (Grunert, 2005).
- As consumers were faced with various protein supply disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the TFQ Model serves as a basis to gain understanding of important consumer factors in choosing protein for their diet.



## Methodology

- Descriptive quantitative study targeting U.S. food consumers who purchased pork from grocery stores during pandemic.
- Survey distributed via Facebook through a personal page asking any viewers to respond to questions.
- 67 consumers responded to 10 survey questions to gain insight into how often respondents think about where food comes from, how COVID-19 has altered pork buying habits, pork meal preparation, and plans to purchase pork in the future.

## Results/Findings

- 57% of respondents thought about food source daily.
- 3 in 4 did not change pork buying during pandemic, 12% purchased less, 6% more, 6% bought pork in bulk.
- 77% reported taste as top factor for protein, price (61%), meat source (41.8%), health benefits (30%), convenience (25%), and label preferences (10%).
- In previous month, 85% purchased chicken, 82% pork, 79% beef, 33% seafood, 24% turkey, 3% plant alternatives.

## Conclusions/Implications

- Nine in ten consumers considered food source at least once per week.
- Consumers reported chicken as the most purchased protein during the pandemic which is consistent with previous findings (Daniel et al., 2011).
- Respondents signaled intentions to buy more beef than chicken or pork.
- Findings support the TFQ model that taste and value reign supreme in consumer protein preferences.
- Pandemic food shortages and news coverage of supply chain issues may have impacted protein demand.
- Although beef and pork were front and center in consumers' minds, respondents purchased poultry as their top choice.
- Are these buying habits permanent?

### References

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