The Public Perception of Meat Labeling

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The public perception on meat labeling and their knowledge of USDA meat labels were reviewed through a survey. This project was designed to compare the difference between actual knowledge and definitions of labels. A survey of fourteen questions taken by 765 anonymous volunteers ranging in age of 18 to 76 years old. Demographics included a wide range of communities from those living on a farm or ranch to those living in a large city. The survey was set up to be taken on social media and respondents were given an opportunity to take it over a two-week period. It was hypothesized that 75% of respondents were thought o have boughten their beef from grocery stores based solely on price. When analyzing the data, 533 people bought their meat products from a grocery store, overall beef was consumed more than chicken at 67.1%, even though chicken is the most consumed meat in America as found in statistical studies, according to Global Meat Production. When choosing meat from a retail store, the consumer's first priority is the quality, according to 449 responses. In this study, four questions were asked about the definitions of common USDA labeling definitions found on meat products such as: all-natural, antibiotic free, no-added hormones, and Certified Angus Beef. The "all-natural" definition survey question was the only question that was answered more correctly than incorrectly by 99 people. Overall, only 39% of the people answered all four label definitions correctly with 61% incorrectly. 625 consumers would buy labeled meat if the label displayed where it was born, raised, and slaughtered at. Finally, 394 people say they would pay more for labeled meat products. In conclusion, this survey showed that consumers are not educated when buying meat products.