

CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE AND PURCHASING PRACTICES OF FRESH FISH

Georgina Hall

Project Supervisor: Dr. Patricia Dyett

2012

Background: Fish is an important source of protein and it is widely consumed for its health benefits and taste. It is believed to be a healthier choice of protein source than most other meats since it contains Omega 3 fatty acids which are claimed to aid in the treatment and prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases. However despite this major health benefit, fish, especially fresh fish, can be detrimental to health if not handled with care as it is a highly perishable commodity. 'Fresh fish' refers to fish which has never been frozen and has an acceptable shelf life of ten days (Wedemeyer 2003).

Objective: This study sought to prove that a relationship exists between consumer's awareness on the assessment of the quality of fresh fish and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Design: One hundred fresh fish consumers from the inland and coastal regions of Trinidad were surveyed by a questionnaire which had questions pertaining to purchasing behaviour, demographics, awareness on fresh fish quality characteristics, and fish- borne illnesses.

Results: Results showed that a majority of the consumers purchase from the local fish market and the main quality factor of most importance to the consumers was found to be freshness of fish. Also, results showed that the mean awareness of the characteristics of fresh fish quality is 29 ± 10.013 while the mean awareness of fish borne illnesses is 1.84 ± 2.852 . Additionally, correlations showed that at the 1% level of significance supermarket purchases is related to consumers' awareness of the characteristics of fresh fish; while at the 5% level of significance sea- side purchases and the frequency of purchases are related to consumers' awareness of the characteristics of fresh fish.

Conclusion: Therefore, it was concluded that consumers are aware of the quality characteristics of fresh fish