

CONSUMERS PERCEPTIONS OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS OF LAVRAS – MINAS GERAIS, BRAZIL, IN RELATION TO THE INSPECTION SERVICE AND FOOD SAFETY

(PERCEPÇÃO DOS CONSUMIDORES DE PRODUTOS DE ORIGEM ANIMAL DE LAVRAS – MINAS GERAIS, BRASIL, EM RELAÇÃO AO SERVIÇO DE INSPEÇÃO E SEGURANÇA DOS ALIMENTOS)

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This study aims at characterizing consumers of animal origin products (AOP) in Lavras, Minas Gerais state, regarding their perceptions of the AOP inspection service and concepts about food safety. A questionnaire with objective questions related to social status, education level, knowledge of the importance of the inspection service and possible diseases transmitted by AOP was elaborated. The locals of the interviews were selected by simple random sampling among the most representative supermarkets in the city. A total of 101 interviews were conducted with consumers approached randomly from both sexes and older than 18 years of age. The results were obtained through a descriptive analysis of the collected data. From the results, it was concluded that there was ignorance about the AOP inspection service (76%), as well as the role of the veterinarian in preserving the health of consumers (85%). Although 92% of respondents had knowledge regarding possible foodborne diseases that can be transmitted by products of dubious origin when they were questioned about the benefits of consuming products from inspected animals, 23% said they were not aware of such benefits, or related to the quality of product (28%) and food safety (36%). Product quality is perceived by the consumers as foods sold within the validity period and commercialized in good conditions. Food safety is understood as guaranteed when consuming a certified product of known origin. Given this reality is necessary to raise awareness among consumers, emphasizing the importance of health certification and the possible zoonotic diseases that can be transmitted by AOP.

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