

CUSTOMERS WANT QUALITY STANDARD MARK ON PRE-PACKED HAM

Eighty per cent of consumers believe in and trust the Quality Standard Mark (QSM) for ham. Seventy four per cent believe it is an important indication of the quality of the product, whilst 60 per cent believe that it guarantees the product meets UK production standards.



And importantly, where the Mark is not present on pack, the majority of shoppers feel that they cannot trust retailers to source pre-packed ham from approved suppliers. Indeed, just under one in five believe that retailers will sacrifice standards for money.

These key findings, which stem from research* commissioned by the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC), confirm that shoppers would like to see more than just the retailer's name on pack in order to guarantee the quality of the product.

Instantly recognisable to over half of consumers, the research also demonstrates that the Quality Standard Mark is seen as a mark of distinction and a clear indication of quality. Eighty per cent of respondents said that they believe in and trust the Mark and 75 per cent claim it is relevant to their purchasing decisions.



64% say that if the QSM was used on-pack their trust in standards being met would increase.

74% say that the use of the QSM would add value in terms of assuring the quality of the product.

notable exception. For this retailer over 50 per cent of its own customers still stated that their trust would rise if the mark was included on its pre-packed ham.

"What's more, over 70 per cent of ham buyers said they would be more likely to buy products which had the Quality Standard Mark clearly on display, so not only does the presence of the Mark increase trust in the supermarkets, but it is also more likely to encourage consumers to make a purchase."

The research confirmed that over 90 per cent of consumers believe that the inclusion of the Mark is as important to them on bacon and sausages as it is on pre-packed ham.

76% say that the QSM has relevance to their decision regarding which ham to purchase.

72% say that they would be more likely to buy ham with the QSM logo on the pack.

MLC marketing and consumer affairs director, Richard Lowe, said: "In commissioning this research, we set out to establish whether there is a distinct advantage for the UK retail industry in clearly displaying the Quality Standard Mark on own-label pre-packed ham. Although some retailers do feature the Mark on pack, others believe that their name alone is enough reassurance for consumers.

"So we asked shoppers to tell us whether they felt they could trust their supermarket to source pre-packed ham from an assured supplier. The findings revealed that two-thirds believe their trust in the retailer would rise if the Quality Standard Mark was added to pre-packed ham products, with one



RICHARD LOWE

"The overriding message is that by ensuring the Quality Standard Mark features prominently, consumers are more likely to buy the product."

Lowe added: "The findings show that shoppers have varying degrees of confidence in retailers when it comes to trusting them to source assured ham products and we're currently in the process of providing feedback to each retailer about the reaction from their own customers.

"But by and large the overriding message is that by ensuring the Quality Standard Mark for pork, bacon ham and sausages features prominently on all products which meet UK welfare and quality assurance standards, consumers are not only more likely to buy the product, but the Mark will help to reinforce their trust in the retailer. Surely that's a win-win situation retailers cannot afford to overlook?"

* Ham Quality Mark Study, MarketTools - June 2006