

IMPACT OF PRICE ON CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TO SEVERAL LAMB CUTS

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Adoption by the retail sector of new lamb cuts, many in a boneless form (Currie and Thatcher 1988), will increase the purchasing options of consumers. However the impact of price on the decision to purchase traditional compared to new cuts has not been extensively studied (Thatcher 1988). Reported here is the result of a survey which studied the influence of price on consumer preference for 2 different lamb cuts in both a bone-in and boneless form.

A lamb carcass with a cold weight of 19.0 kg, a GR measurement of 13.0 mm (total tissue thickness at the 12th rib 110 mm from the midline of the carcass) and an even fat cover was used. A bone-in leg (shank and chump on) was prepared from 1 side of the carcass. The leg from the remaining side was boned out. Seven **midloin** chops (bone-in) were prepared from 1 side of the carcass and 4 valentine chops from the other side. The cuts were displayed in a refrigerated cabinet. Respondents were asked which cut they preferred and then their preference if the total price was the same for both cuts.

Of the 151 people interviewed, 91 (60%) preferred the bone-in leg. From within this sample 54 (59%) maintained their preference for this cut when asked to consider price. Thirty-seven (41%) changed their preference. Of those who preferred the bone-out leg, 60 (40%), 51 (85%) maintained this preference when asked to consider price and only 9 (15%) changed their preference. There was a strong preference for the **midloin** chops, 109 (72%) of the sample preferring them to valentine chops. Of the 109 respondents, 93 (85%) maintained their preference when asked about price and only 16 (15%) changed their selection. For the valentine chops 40 (95%) maintained their selection and only 2 (5%) changed their preference.

For the leg cuts, although a significant number of respondents selected the bone-in option, there was a strong shift towards the bone-out form when the total price to be paid was the same. This was in contrast to the bone-out leg. It would seem that the respondents viewed the bone-out leg as better value although, on a per kilogram basis, the price would have been higher. The strong preference for **midloin** over valentine chops was unexpected, based on previous work (Currie and Thatcher 1988) and may have been due to the level of subcutaneous fat which can readily appear excessive on valentine cuts because of their form. It is apparent that the consumer's view of value for money will be influenced by the range of cuts on offer.

CURRIE, J. R. and THATCHER, L. P. (1988). *Aust. Rural Science Annual* pp. 11-12.

THATCHER, L. P. (1988). *Food Technology in Australia* 40: 57-9.