

CIWF Food Business  
Qualitative Research

Exploring Quality in relation to Welfare

16 November 2010



- **The issue of tasty, safe and healthy food was the key benefit that crossed consumer types. This, as we shall see later, was more easily and more powerfully linked to animal welfare than the more general issue of ‘quality’, which for many is already delivered**

*“I don’t like to think of them all cooped up”*  
(40s BC1)

**Free range**

**Corn fed**

*“I got salmonella from chicken once and I’m really, really careful what I buy now”*  
(30s C2D)

**Organic**

**From such and such a farm**



- **Most were looking for something beyond just avoidance of the cheapest packs and motivations were a mixture of quality, health and animal welfare. This applies most to whole birds and buying chicken pieces. For most when buying food with chicken as an ingredient consumers tend forget about the bird and think of it as ‘supper’**

*“I kind of thought what I was buying was OK cos I’m not buying the cheap stuff, now I’m thinking that maybe that’s not the case”  
(30s BC1)*

- Consumers would like to be able to make an informed choice about the welfare of animals farmed for the meat they are eating
- Once the idea of a higher welfare choice has been lodged with consumers, the link between this and their own health, as well that of the animal is both credible and motivating
- In addition, offering a choice helps consumers to feel this is an issue they can do something about. Interestingly, no-one felt that this was not their responsibility, it is above all a lack of thought or awareness – once consumers begin to think about welfare many feel they would like to play their part - in the way they have begun to do with free range eggs and, to a lesser extent, chickens

Benefits to consumers of  
better standards of  
animal welfare –  
message and language

- As we have already said, consumers are not thinking about welfare
  - Because they aren't being given the information to make an informed choice at the point of purchase
  - because they tend to think of domestic pets and animal rights when they hear the term Animal Welfare
  - Because it is clear on prompting they are confused about what higher welfare might mean
- However, it was clear that if consumers knew which farms animals have been well looked after, and which weren't – then this can prompt them to think again and could well impact on what they buy – provided this is a clearly understood and not excessively expensive choice

- For all the biggest top of mind issue when thinking about welfare is freedom to move about – driven by awareness of confinement of chickens for all and, for a very small minority, pigs
- Closely allied to this, and top of mind when thinking about how better cared for animals would be better for you is that animals are not dosed up with chemicals
- Details of a suggested revision to the overall higher welfare description are in the appendices

***“For me quality means fat – I don’t want to buy a joint and then have to trim off the excess fat – I want to buy it, cook it and enjoy it”  
(30s C2D)***

- As we have seen, the quality of meat and eggs is obviously important to people and, although quality is a credible consequence of better standards of animal welfare, quality is a vague concept
- There are many ways in which quality can be and is delivered including the cut, organic, more lean less fat, no additives – not to mention the quality branding devices like ‘Taste the difference’ or ‘Tesco’s finest’



***“Point out the health benefits to the people who are going to eat it as well as to the animal and I’m sure that will sway people”  
(50s BC1)***

- Consumers were most interested in and receptive to a health message
  - because this taps into existing residual knowledge about problems with the food chain being dangerous to our health
  - because the link between looking after the animals and it being better (healthier) for you is a credible one
  - ***“it makes sense that if they are treated better, their meat will be healthier because they are healthier and that’s got to be better for you”***
- ‘We are what we eat’ is a well understood idea
- Our own health and that of our families in a valuable commodity
- Taste is a more personal thing, and a secondary benefit as many believe taste like quality is already delivered



- **Health researched much more powerfully as the benefit of better standards of animal welfare because it was relatively easy to make a clear and positive link in people's minds between the way an animal lived naturally being of benefit to the health of both the animal and the consumer (less stress, less disease)**

Insight



- Many consumers would like to be able to make an informed choice about the welfare of pigs, cows, sheep and chickens farmed for the meat they are eating

Benefit



- **What we eat is important to our health and it is healthier for you and the animal when animals are reared in natural ways**
  - *Natural understood to mean not fed with nasties and allowed to roam*

RTB



- Meat and eggs from animals reared in more natural ways have a higher nutritional value
- Meat and eggs from animals reared in more natural ways means they are less stressed and therefore less prone to disease
- Chicken reared to better standards of welfare have 25% less fat and more protein [than intensively farmed chickens]

***“It needs the message that animals can be well treated and it is much better for us rammed down our throats, we need to keep hearing it – from magazines to tv chefs, to supermarkets, everything”  
(30s C2D)***

- Reared as nature intended
- When animals are farmed more naturally it's better for them and better for you..
- Fair farming/fairly farmed – consumers are already accustomed to fair trade and this puts the emphasis on fairness rather than on production systems or an animal rights footing

***“At the end of the day they are bred to be eaten, we’ll all end up Veggies if we follow that route”  
(30s C2D)***

- What works much less well is anything that anchors the benefit or RTB to a negative (disease, food poisoning)
  - because this is unappetising
  - because people enjoy meat and this makes them feel pushed away from it
  - Because focus on the negative can make people just want to ignore the whole issue
  
- Price comparisons also tended to be negatively received because they are divorced from what you are actually paying in the shops for a chicken or a chop and because they tend to over emphasise the price difference, not demonstrate how little it is
  - Perhaps better to offer an informed choice and a strong health benefit and allow consumers (within reason) to decide for themselves on value for money

*Full details on the benefits and RTBs considered in this research are in the appendices*



The opportunity for  
supermarkets

*“It would be great if they did the thinking for us – that we’d know on choosing Waitrose or whoever championed this, that everything was compassionately farmed”  
(40s BC1)*



- Consumers would welcome being offered an informed choice by supermarkets
  - “this to me would say its even better quality”
  - “this would be my everyday choice, because I can feel better about this
  
- What they would welcome more is one of the major supermarkets taking a strong lead on this
  - “this would be a really positive stance for a supermarket to take” (50s BC1)
  - “once one supermarket or someone like MacDonalds or Pret did it, then everyone would eventually have to follow suit” (50s BC1)
  - “It would create massive headlines and credit for the supermarket prepared to take this stance” (30s C2D)
  
- Consumers felt this would be a strong positive good news story for the supermarket prepared to move on this first
  - “Morrisons might have done the British thing but this is so much more powerful and motivating” (30s C2D)

- In the absence of a strong – everything here is naturally reared\* message – for this initiative to be seen and understood by consumers CIWF Food Business partners would need to publicise this initiative extensively
- **The key is making the message (naturally reared\*) and benefit (healthier choice for you and better for them) both uniform and clearly understood**



*(\* dependent on final expression agreed on)*



*“Get Hugh in,  
that’s all you  
need”  
(40s BC1)*

- Ideally the problem and the solution would most benefit from being popularised by a celebrity chef
- This would build awareness by taking it straight into the living rooms of consumers and is credible because consumers trust these personalities
  - They wouldn’t just be doing it for the publicity
  - They aren’t animal rights activists
  - They care about the quality and health values of what we eat
- The message needs to take a positive approach that focuses on the solution
- Beyond this, consumers need a blanket approach
  - Information through supermarket magazines
  - Simple explanations on posters in store
  - Clear shelf signage
  - If possible, clear and uniform on pack signage
  - PR and advertising



***“It has to be uniform, it can’t be this symbol for one shop and a different one for another”  
(50s BC1)***

- Uniformity of the on pack message is as important as finding the words that are instantly understood
- Consumer opinion was divided as to the best term. All of the following, we believe, have the potential to be successful – provided they are backed by clear and consistent explanations:
  - Naturally reared
  - Fairly farmed/fair farming
  - Farmed naturally
  - Compassionately reared/farmed (although this has a downside for some as can lead some to cynicism about treating animals too well *“they really want us all to be veggies”*)