

Perception and awareness of animal welfare related to meat consumption amongst the students in the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Animal welfare is an emerging area in whole over the world, and it is not well established in the current education system in Sri Lanka. Thus, we assume that most people do not have a clear picture about the welfare of meat producing animals and humane slaughtering. This study was carried out to assess the awareness and perception of animal welfare related to meat consumption among the students of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka in order to get an idea on arranging future awareness programs on food animal welfare. This questionnaire included two major areas; meat consumption and the awareness of animal welfare. Surveyed data were descriptively analyzed by using IBM SPSS statistics. Respondents were randomly selected among the students and the data were gathered by using Google forms online. This study group comprised of 42 males (21%) and 158 females (79%). Among the respondents, 88% consumed meat. Most of the respondents' aware of different killing methods caused different level of pain and stress (83.0%) in animals, and 82.0% interested in animal welfare. Also, there was a relationship between the awareness about the different killing methods caused different level of pain and stress and the type of meat (stunned or not stunned at the time of killing animals) most prefer to eat ($\alpha=0.05$, $p= 0.020$). Also, there was a relationship between the engaged degree program and the interest for the animal welfare ($\alpha=0.05$, $p= 0.006$), and meat consumption with gender ($\alpha=0.05$, $p=0.031$). Majority of the respondents had a positive perception on food animal welfare. Thus, it is concluded that there is a good potential to arrange awareness programs on importance of animal welfare in meat production among the surveyed population.

Keywords: Animal welfare, Animal welfare-friendly product, Meat consumption, Pain

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