

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF RABBIT MEAT IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF MEXICO CITY

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ABSTRACT

Meat rabbit is a nourishing alternative for people; however, its consumption in Mexico City and in the municipalities of its conurbation is limited. The purpose of this research was to determine the consumption of rabbit meat and its limiting factors, as well as getting elements to encourage a better rabbit meat commercialization. A market research was carried out in Mexico City and some municipalities of its conurbation. Eight hundred consumers were randomly chosen and surveyed in 12 districts of Mexico City and 4 Municipalities. From this sample, 26.25% of the surveyed people consumed regularly rabbit meat. The people that regularly consumed rabbit meat in Mexico City showed a mean value of 21%. On the other hand, the average regular consumption of the product in the four municipalities was 46%. The consumption of rabbit meat in the two locations showed a difference, being higher in the municipalities of the State of Mexico.

Key words: rabbit meat, consumption, Mexico City.

INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Area of Mexico City (MAMC) is an urban conglomerate that includes the well-known territory of the Federal District and 56 surrounding municipalities of the State of Mexico and one of the State of Hidalgo. Although official figures don't exist, the MAMC is, with no doubt one of the main consumption centres of rabbit meat in the country. Rabbit meat has well known nutritious characteristics (low cholesterol, high protein). Additionally, rabbit production systems in Mexico have a potential for being sustainable. Despite the two previous facts, the lack of information on diverse aspects of rabbit production in Mexico is a problem to be investigated. One of the most notorious gaps of information regarding rabbit production in Mexico is how the consumption of rabbit meat is carried out in the MAMC. The objective of this paper was to study the consumption pattern of rabbit meat in Mexico City and in its conurbation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to obtain the information a survey of questionnaire was designed and field tested. The questionnaire was aimed at knowing the rabbit meat consumption patterns in the MAMC. After being tested, the survey was applied aleatorily in a study area that included 12 districts of the Mexico City and 4 municipalities of its conurbation selected aleatorily (CASTRO, 1997) Once the areas of study were selected, a sample within these was taken and then the questionnaires were applied. The selection of the interviewees was random following the interception of sample unit's technique. Sample size was established in 784 surveys; therefore to prevent the omissions or lack of answers, 800 samples were taken. Likewise, it was determined a number of 50 consumers per district or municipality to be interviewed (SCHEAFFER *et al.*, 1990). Data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistic (central tendency and dispersion measures). Results were expressed as proportions and percentages of the analyzed sample (WEISS and HAZTE, 1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 800 people interviewed, 26.25% consumed rabbit meat periodically while 73.75% did not include it into their daily diets.

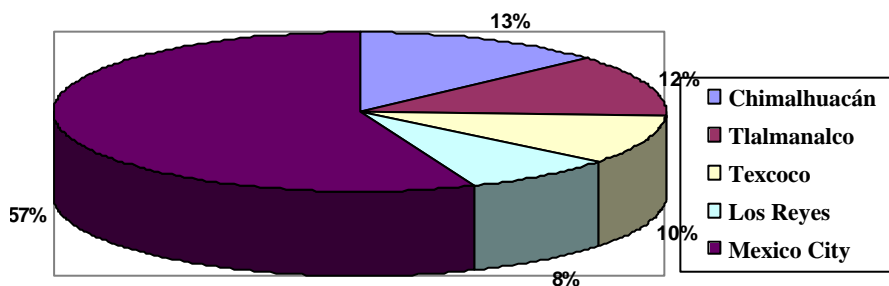


Figure 1. Consumption of rabbit meat in the MAMC.

Of people that consumed rabbit meat 57% was from Mexico City, while the remaining 43% was located in the municipalities of its conurbation (Figure 1).

Considering the consumption areas of rabbit meat, the districts of “Lomas de Virreyes” and “Santa Fe” were the places within Mexico City where the consumption was higher (17.14 and 9.52%, respectively). In relation to the total of affirmative answers, the average consumption of the studied colonies in Mexico City was 21%, while in the municipalities (Chimalhuacán, Tlalmanalco, Texcoco and Los Reyes) the average consumption was 56%, 52%, 42% and 34%, respectively.

The reasons why rabbit meat is not consumed in the MAMC are shown in Figure 2.

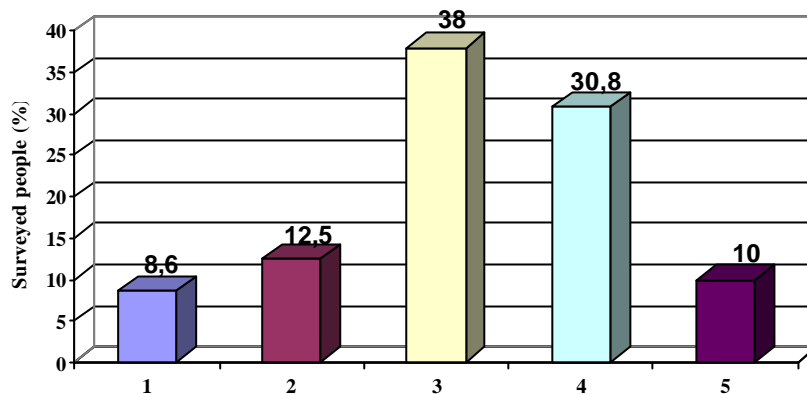


Figure 2. Reason why rabbit meat is not consumed in the MAMC.

Key: 1: It is expensive; 2: does not know it is sold; 3: Never has tested it; 4: Is not interested in it and 5: another.

According to the previous figure, answers 3 and 4 represented the most important reasons why rabbit meat is not consumed in the MAMC (never has tested it and is not interested in it). On the other hand, Figure 3 shows the consumption frequency of people answered positively in Mexico City.

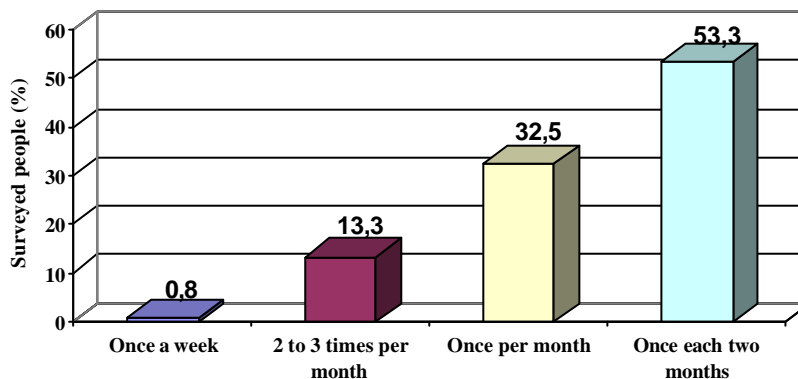


Figure 3. Consumption frequency of rabbit meat in Mexico City.

The consumption frequency of rabbit meat in the MAMC followed two similar patterns. One for the settlements of the Federal District and another one for the municipalities of its conurbation (Figures 3 and 4). The difference between the areas studied was mainly related to people that only consume rabbit meat once per month. In the State of Mexico people consumed rabbit meat once per month. This meant that its overall consumption was higher. This could be demonstrated by means of a standardization of the consumption. If we consider the persons that consume the product once per week, this is equal to four times per month. This could also be applied to other groups by multiplying the percentage of consumption by the number of times per week that the meat is eaten as can be appreciated in the following equation:

$$53.3\% (0.5) + 32.5 (1) + 13.3\% (2) + 0.8\%(4) = 89.0\%$$

once each once per 2-3 times once a week
two months month per month

This is equivalent to Figure 4, in which 89% of people consume rabbit meat once a month.

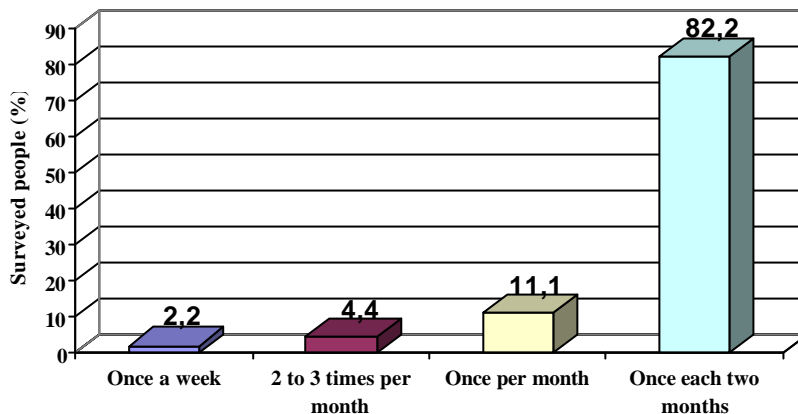


Figure 4. Frequency of rabbit meat consumption in the municipalities of the state of Mexico.

The situation was different in the municipalities of the State of Mexico, since consumption was concentrated in the group of people that eat it only once per two months (82.2%), while people that consumed it once a month represent 11.1%. A percentage of 4.4% consumed it 2 or 3 times per month and a 2.2% once per week. This can be expressed as an adjusted percentage as follows:

$$82.2\% (0.5) + 11.1\% (1) + 4.4\% (2) + 2.2 (4) = 69.8\%$$

once each once per 2-3 times once a week
two months month per month

This equation represented that 69.8% of the consumers bought rabbit meat once per month.

CONCLUSIONS

The consumption of rabbit meat in the MAMC followed a clearly different pattern in the districts of Mexico City and in the municipalities of the State of Mexico. This is probably due to the presence of tourist corridors in these municipalities, reported by LÓPEZ *et al.* (2000). These touristic corridors are placed in the outskirts of the MAMC, where people from the City go during the weekends seeking rural landscapes and typical foods.

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