

## SELLING POINTS AND FORMS OF CONSUMPTION OF RABBIT MEAT IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF MEXICO CITY

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify the selling points of rabbit meat as well as its forms of consumption. A market research was carried out in 12 random selected districts of Mexico City and in 4 of its conurbation. Eight hundred consumers chosen randomly were surveyed. It was found that the main selling centres in Mexico City were department stores (51.6%) and restaurants (40.4%). In the municipalities, consumers buy rabbit meat directly from the producer (38.5%), in the tianguis - local traditional Mexican markets - (24.0%), and in restaurants (22.1%). The main restraint for the consumption was the lack of promotion (according to 59.0% of consumers). Forms of consumption were linked to traditional ways of preparing other types of meat such as the mixiote, barbecued, grilled, marinated, fried and other.

**Key words:** Rabbit, rabbit meat, commercialization, market research.

### INTRODUCTION

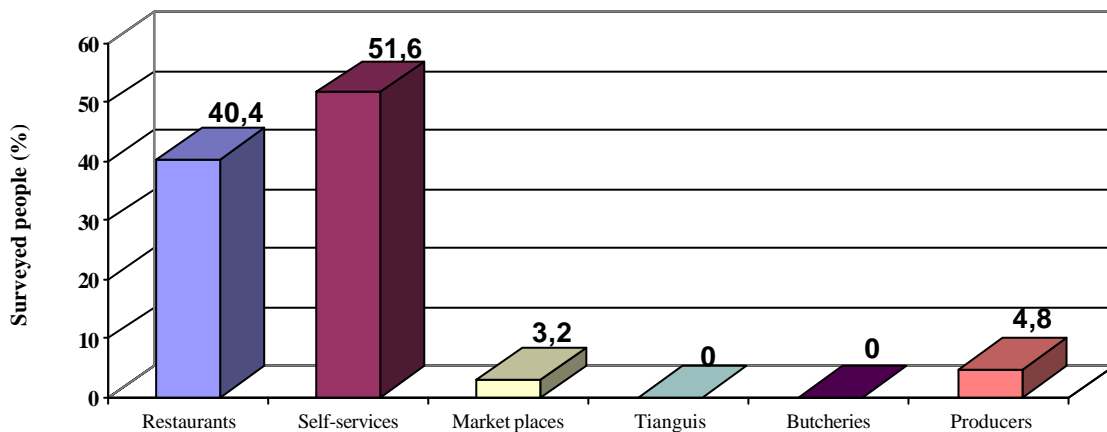
The Metropolitan Area of the Mexico City (ZMCM) is an urban conglomerate that includes the territory known as Federal District and around 56 municipalities of its conurbation of the State of Mexico and one of the State of Hidalgo. Although official figures do not exist, the ZMCM is, without a doubt one of the main centres of rabbit meat consumption 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 ZMCM. The objective of this paper was to study the consumption pattern of rabbit meat in Mexico City and in its conurbation. The objective of this paper was to study the selling points and consumption forms of rabbit meat in Mexico City and in its conurbation.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A field survey was designed and applied to study the selling points and consumption forms of rabbit meat in the ZMCM. After being proven, the survey was applied at random in a study area that included 12 districts of Mexico City and 4 municipalities of its conurbation. 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

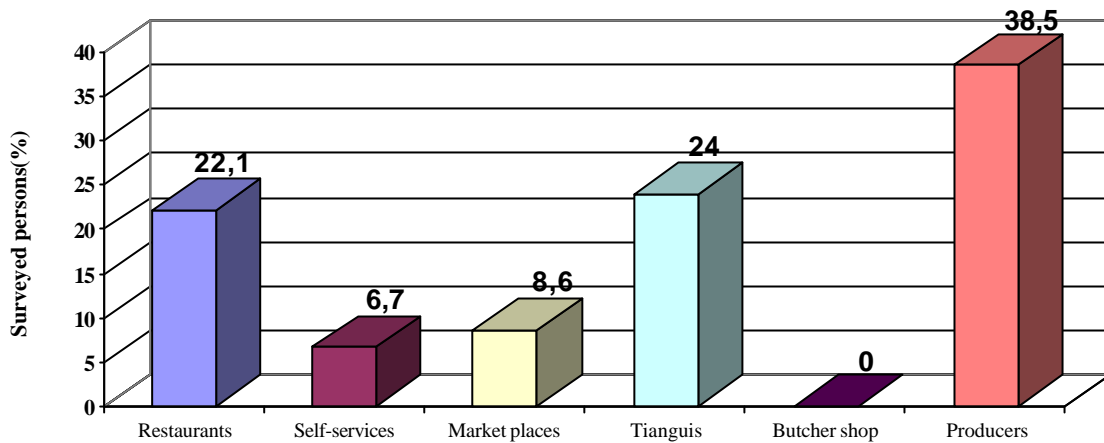
In Mexico City, 51.6% of the consumers bought the rabbit meat in self-service stores, while 40.4% of them consumed it in restaurants. 3.2% of the consumers bought the product in market places and 4.8% of them from the producer (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Selling points for rabbit meat in Mexico City.**

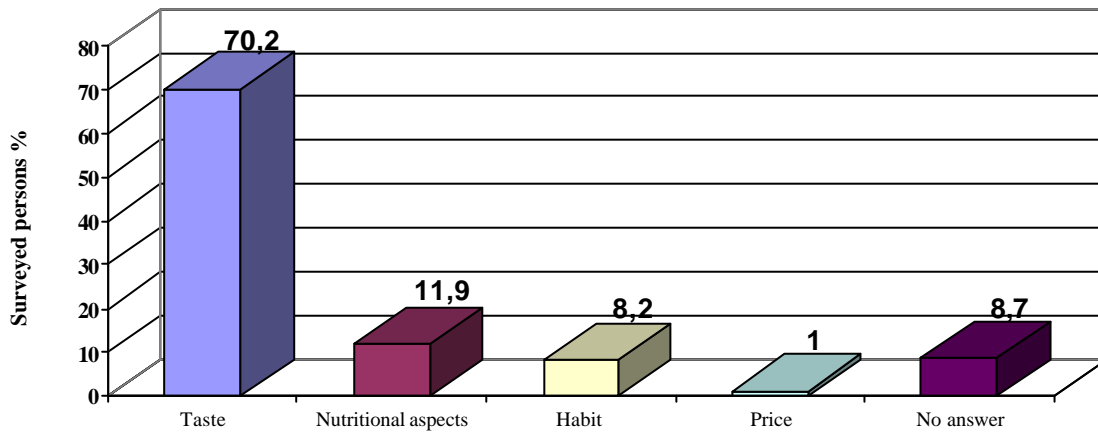
The sale of the product in tianguis or in butcher's shops was not considerable for the consumers in Mexico City. 40.4% of the consumers bought rabbit meat already prepared in restaurants and the remaining 59.6% of them cooked the product.

In the municipalities 38.5% of the consumers bought rabbit meat directly from the producer, while 24.0% of them did it in the tianguis and 22.1% of them consumed the product in restaurants. The points of sale with the smallest consumption were the markets and the self-service stores (8.6 and 6.7%, respectively), while butcher's shops were not outstanding. People that bought rabbit meat already cooked represented 22.1% (restaurants) (Figure 2).



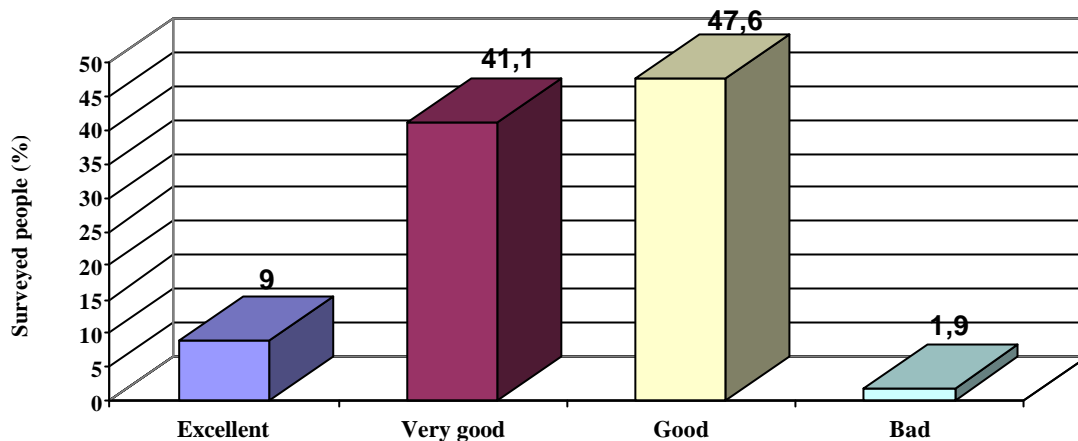
**Figure 2. Selling points of rabbit meat in the municipalities of its conurbation of the State of Mexico.**

Meat flavour was the main reason of rabbit meat consumption according to 70.2% of people, while 11.9% of them consumed it due to its nutritional characteristics. Only 8.2% of people surveyed consumed it by habit and 8.7% of them did not respond the question (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Reasons why consumers buy product.**

According to 47.6% of the consumers the flavour of rabbit meat is good, while to 41.4% of them it is very good; and only to 9.0% of them the flavour is excellent. In contrast, 1.9% of the people surveyed did not find the flavour pleasant (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Opinion of the flavour of rabbit meat.**

Regarding the nutritional characteristics of rabbit meat, 65.7% of the consumers ignored these, while 34.3% knew several. The low-level of fat was mentioned seldom, since only 32.3% of the consumers knew about this. 11.4% of those interviewed knew that the rabbit meat is rich in proteins, while only 7.6% knew that it contained low level of salts.

The most preferred ways of preparing rabbit meat were grilled (30.9%), mixiotes (30.4%), marinated (24.3%), fried (20.5%) and in barbecue. Of the people interviewed only 6.2% consumed the product in way different to those above listed, while 93.8% eat it in traditional ways.

Some of the limiting factors of rabbit meat consumption included lack of market promotion (59.0%). In a complementary way, 37.6% of the people surveyed considered that the lack of selling points contributed to an unsteady consumption of the product. Price as limiting factor for rabbit consumption was important only for 7.1% of the consumers, while 4.8% of them did not emit opinion in this respect.

## CONCLUSIONS

The consumption of rabbit meat in the ZMCM showed a clearly different pattern for the sampled districts of Mexico City and the municipalities of its conurbation. This was probably derived from the outskirts location and thus the presence of tourist corridors in these municipalities as reported by LÓPEZ *et al.* (2000). Buying the product was mainly due to the flavour and its characteristics; while only few people consumed it for nutritional reasons. Other problem was that producers did not offer a constant volume of rabbit meat along the year due to technical and sanitary problems. This lack of reliability on offering the product has limited the development of the market

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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