Does Knowledge Influence Taste? The Difference Between Humane and Factory Farm Jerky

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Abstract
There exists a separation between eating meat, and the life of the animal being eaten. In this study, we further explored this meat paradox by analyzing participants’ meat preferences, based on the differences in origin of each meat sample. Participants were shown two different descriptions of two identical samples of beef jerky; a description in which the cow was raised in humane conditions, and a description in which the cow was raised in inhumane conditions. After they had consumed each sample, they were asked to rate their experience on a sliding scale. Ratings in the humane condition were significantly higher than inhumane ratings for each question. These results show that knowledge of how meat is produced can significantly influence the experience of the product.

Methods
This experiment included 145 participants, 90 male and 54 female while one participant chose not to indicate gender. In data analysis, 26 participants were removed because they didn’t remember the descriptions, 29 were removed because they were suspicious, and 3 were removed for both reasons. Participants were given two meat samples, each with different descriptions (see Fig. 3). After tasting the samples, they were asked to rate each sample based on the following factors:
• Appearance
• Smell
• Taste
• Enjoyment, and willingness to pay for sample
• Tendency to eat the sample again
The questionnaires were administered online via a Qualtrics survey system (www.qualtrics.com).

Results
Paired t-tests were used to compare humane and factory farm ratings. Overall, the results show higher ratings for meat products from humanely raised animals, compared to jerky paired with the factory farm description (Figs. 4, 5, 6). Participant ratings based of appearance, smell, taste, enjoyment, and tendency to eat again, were more positive for the meat sample with the humane description.

Conclusion
These results support our hypothesis that knowledge of animal conditions can influence the eating experience. Our data (Figs. 4, 5, 6) shows that participants enjoyed the meat sample that they believed was from a humane source. In future studies, a more salient meat product, such as deli ham, will be used to see if a more meaty product will have a stronger effect on participant responses. Also, a control condition with no description will be added.

References
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