Study finds acceptance for insects in animal feed

It seems the idea of using insects in animal feed is generally looked upon favourably by consumers and industry, according to research by Ghent University in Belgium. It recently published its study: *Insects in animal feed: Acceptance and its determinants among farmers, agriculture sector stakeholders and citizens*, in the journal *Animal Feed Science and Technology*, which showed that only 17% of the 415 farmers, agriculture stakeholders and consumers surveyed rejected the idea. The study found that the resulting livestock products, from using insects in feed, were viewed as being more sustainable, nutritious and healthy, but it was suggested there was a risk of off-flavours and allergens.

According to the University, the use of insects in feed is one potential solution to improving the sustainability of animal diets, as well as maintaining the legitimacy of livestock production.

As part of the research project by the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, 196 farmers, 137 agriculture sector stakeholders and 82 consumers in Flanders, Belgium, were interviewed about "their attitudes, product attribute beliefs, perceived benefits, risks and concerns, and willingness-to-accept and use insect-based animal feed and the resulting livestock products". The Flanders region has a specialised intensive livestock farming industry, according to the University.

Those most in favour of the use of insects were, perhaps unsurprisingly, agriculture sector stakeholders, followed by consumers and then farmers, with the highest levels of acceptance for fish and poultry feed, followed by pig feed, and to a lower extent pet food and cattle feed. Poultry meat from animals fed on insect-based diets was rejected by 17%, while interestingly beef from cattle fed on insect-based diets was rejected by 25%.

Professor Wim Verbeke, lead author of the study, said: "The more people believed that insects are wholesome and acceptable as food for themselves as human beings, the stronger their belief that insects fit as an ingredient for animal feed as well."

The authors said the study confirmed the policy debate should focus primarily on the use insects in feed for fish, poultry, and pigs.

Halal meat supplier extends deal with Tesco

Halal meat brand Ghanim International UK has extended its range of frozen, microwavable products in Tesco.

Ghanim International UK has launched its ‘Chilli Nacho Chicken Drumstick’ and ‘Garlic Butter Chicken Kiev’ in more than 42 Tesco stores, as part of its Brunei Halal range. The company said combining quality-assured British meat with innovative products, while addressing the needs of second- and third-generation Muslim consumers, was a key focus.

Dr Mohammad Nazir, CEO of Ghanim International UK, began talks with senior management at Tesco more than a year ago and has seen the partnership flourish, with the range now being expanded into chilled products. "We responded to Tesco’s challenge for more innovative products," Nazir said.

"Our brand has been recognised as having strength by sourcing British local produce and a high level of halal integrity, quality and presentation. I feel really excited that Tesco has been able to see our vision in reaching out to the second- and third-generation Muslim consumers in the UK."

Meanwhile, Ghanim International UK said Tesco was "striving to offer complete halal assurance, ensuring there is quality and traceability from farm to family".

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