

Comparing the Effect of Price, Regional and Environmental References on the Willingness to Purchase Sub-optimal, Regional Dairy Products in Germany

Verena Mückenhausen

Chair of Corporate Management, TU Munich, Germany

Abstract

As part of the European Union, also Germany has committed itself to the United Nations goal of halving its annual 12 tons of food waste by 2030. Consumers are not only increasingly concerned about reducing food waste, but also about buying regional products to shorten transport routes for food. Giving preference to local, regional foods is a general trend in Germany that is still growing. Consumers often recognize regional foods by means of regional labels. At the same time, grocery stores are also trying to reduce food waste with the help of product marking - in the form of product stickers. While the effect of cost-saving and food waste reduction labels on the purchase of sub-optimal food has already been investigated, there is no study that examines the effect of a regional label on the willingness to buy a sub-optimal, regional product. This study aims to close this research gap. For this purpose, a laboratory experiment was conducted with 375 participants in a between-groups design (control group, price saving sticker, generic regional sticker, specific regional sticker, sticker to fight to food waste) on the willingness to buy suboptimal dairy products (two days before expiry of the best-before date). Overall, results show a very high willingness to buy sub-optimal dairy products among study participants. While no significant differences were found between the different sticker manipulations, besides the price saving sticker, study participants' origin is influencing the willingness to buy as well as the participants' attitude towards food waste and to which degree they consider the expiry date as an orientation guide for consumption.

Keywords: regional food, food waste, label, Germany