

P1.065 The role of knowledge in consumers perception of fish fed with insect-based feed

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Abstract

Over the past few years, the aquaculture sector had to find alternative sources for animal feeding, as a possible action to mitigate the environmental impact of its production. This meets consumers' interest in sustainability and food supply chain environmental impact that has significantly increased.

Among such alternative sources, insects have already proved to be very valuable as common feed substitutes. However, fish farmed with insects is still perceived as an unconventional product. In addition, there are still few ongoing studies over the European area on consumer behaviour related to animal origin products fed with insects.

This study aimed to understand if Italian consumers are ready for this innovation. An online survey was developed, web-programmed using Google Forms and completed by 303 Italian consumers aged 18-78 (51% male). Data on consumers' diet, purchasing habits and awareness degree of topics regarding fish diet, feed quality, sustainability, and food neophobia were collected. The final dataset was analyzed using descriptive statistics methods. The effect of diet, neophobia, attitude towards sustainability, purchasing behaviour, knowledge about aquaculture sector, age, gender, region of provenance and willingness to pay on the importance consumers give to the quality of feed, the climate change, buy more sustainably and to the sustainability of insect-based feed was estimated by ANOVA one-way models.

In general, higher is level of knowledge concerning the variables analysed, higher is the willingness to buy and eat innovative products: a significant number of respondents says is ready for this feed change. Younger and female consumers have a higher knowledge degree of aquaculture sector, and consequently they pay more attention to the quality of fish feeding and to its environmental impact. Although the test sample seems to be ready for this innovation, most respondents are not willing to pay more for these products.

Keywords

consumer behavior
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aquaculture
sustainability