Food for thought: consumer perspectives of the environmental impacts of food choices

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Food for Thought: Consumer Perspectives of the Environmental Impacts of Food Choices

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

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Abstract

There is a paucity of information on how consumers perceive environmental risk as impacting on food supply and the relationship of food choices to this risk. Twenty six participants were recruited in the Illawarra region of New South Wales to be involved in this study, which was conducted over a period of eighteen months. A methodology drawing on critical social science theory was used to explore the participants' understanding of the food system and to document the influence of critical reflection over time on participants' food choices. This approach differs from surveys of consumer opinions in that, after setting the initial agenda, it allows for the participants' concerns to become the focus. For health professionals this provides a rich source of information on people's concerns about the food system and also the priority of these for the individual. Such information is invaluable for the development of collaborative projects that aim to address environmental health risks within the food system from the consumer perspective.
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List of Abbreviations

BSE… Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
FSANZ… Food Safety Australia and New Zealand
WHO… World Health Organisation