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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

Doctor of Philosophy

from

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by

LYNDA KRIFLIK

Masters in Education, Graduate Diploma in Environmental
Management

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

2004

Publications From This Research

The research documented in this thesis has been published and presented as following:

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Kriflik, L., & Yeatman H., (2004) "Food Scares and Sustainability: A Consumer Perspective", *Health, Risk and Society* 2005, Vol 7, No.1

Kriflik, L., (2004) *Critical Social Science As A Way Of Exploring Health and Environment*, in Wright, J., (ed.) *Researching in Sport, Physical and Health Education*, Conference Papers, University of Wollongong, pp105-121

Kriflik, L., & Yeatman, H., (2004) "The Environment and Food Safety: A Consumer Perspective", XIVth International Congress of Dietetics 28-31 May 2004, Chicago, USA.

Kriflik., L., & Yeatman, H., (2004) "Consumer Responses to the Environmental Health Risks of the Food System", *From Agriculture to Culture* 9-13 June 2004, New York, USA Joint Annual Conference for the Nth American Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food and Society

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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