

Consumer views on cloned products breed different results, study shows

June 21 2011

Not all consumers share the same attitudes toward animal cloning, but the latest research from Sean Fox, Kansas State University professor of agricultural economics, shows that Americans may be more accepting of consuming cloned animal products than Europeans.

Much of Fox's research focuses on consumer attitudes toward [food safety](#). He worked with Shonda Anderson, a recent master's graduate in [agricultural economics](#), Durango, Colo., to recently explore consumer attitudes on cloned animals.

"We were interested in finding out how different groups of consumers react to the possibility of consuming products that were derived from cloned animals," Fox said. "We were also interested in how those reactions differed between countries, particularly in the United States and Europe."

Fox and Anderson surveyed Kansas State undergraduates in agriculture, English and sociology classes. They also surveyed agriculture undergraduates at University College Dublin in Ireland and Ecole Superieure d'Agriculture in Purpan, France. The survey asked participants about their likelihood of buying and eating meat and other products from cloned animals.

Results showed differences on both an international and local level, most significant being that Americans were more accepting of cloned products than Europeans.

Other findings include:

- Students in Ireland and France were less likely to consume cloned products than Kansas State students.
- At Kansas State, sociology and English students were less likely to consume cloned products than the agriculture students.
- Participants were more likely to consume cloned products after learning that both the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) and the European Food Safety Authority had stated that cloned animal products pose no safety risk.

More of the European students were concerned about [cloning](#) from an ethical and moral perspective, while the American students cited food safety concerns. The strength of opposition to cloning was much stronger for those who morally opposed cloning than for those who opposed it for food safety concerns, Fox said.

The survey also found that women were less likely to purchase cloned products, and people familiar with science were more accepting of cloned products.

"It will be interesting to see how big an impact the messages of groups campaigning for or advocating against the concept of cloning will have on consumers, versus how big an impact that scientific information from a university like Kansas State will have," Fox said. "Or, if people have access to both messages, which they choose to believe."

While the survey results can't be generalized across any large population, Fox said they do offer insight into American and European views toward food technology. Fox and Anderson are working on a similar study in

China and Honduras.

"Results suggest that a significant number of people do have concerns about cloning from an ethical and moral perspective," Fox said. "That will be very relevant if these products come to market and are labeled as such, because we would expect to see a significant number of people avoiding them."

Provided by Kansas State University

Citation: Consumer views on cloned products breed different results, study shows (2011, June 21) retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-consumer-views-cloned-products-results.html>

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