

New study: How happy are Aussies to eat insects?

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Would you fancy a crunchy cricket salad? Or perhaps a mealworm omelette? What about a cockroach sandwich?

Investigating consumer perceptions and attitudes to eating insects is the subject of a new University of Adelaide research project starting at the University's Waite campus in August with an online consumer survey.

"Growth in the middle-classes of developing countries has significantly increased global demand for high quality animal [protein](#), while concerns over food security have stimulated interest in alternate sources of protein," says project leader Associate Professor Kerry Wilkinson, from the University's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine.

"As a consequence, there has been growing interest in eating insects with nations around the world being encouraged to consider [edible insects](#) as an emerging [agricultural industry](#)."

But while insects form part of the traditional diet in many developing countries, in Australia consumption of insects tends to occur only as a novelty.

"To date, there have been few attempts to evaluate [consumer perceptions](#) of and attitudes towards the consumption of edible insects," says Associate Professor Wilkinson. "To support this emerging agricultural industry, research is needed to look at ways of overcoming barriers to insect consumption in Australia and enhancing consumer acceptance of

both edible insects and products containing insect-based ingredients."

This project will investigate consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards a range of edible insects (for example crickets, mealworms, ants and cockroaches) and products containing insect-based ingredients (for example high protein flours and powders), along with their sensory properties and nutritional profiles.

"Certain insects may appeal to consumers more than others or might offer superior nutritional content," says Associate Professor Wilkinson. "Perhaps the addition of flavourings and/or coatings may also influence consumers' acceptance or, alternatively, incorporating them into common products, breads or biscuits for example."

She says edible insects can have economic and environmental advantages over more traditional livestock-based meat sources of protein because of significantly higher feed conversion rates. Insects are also good sources of protein, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, fibre, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates.

More information: The researchers are looking for participants in an initial consumer survey. Interested people should go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/EdibleInsectQuestionnaire

Provided by University of Adelaide

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