

Willingness to consume insect-based food in France: Determinants and consumer perspectives

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The sustainability of the current food production systems is being jeopardized due to global trends, such as urbanization, which have shifted consumption patterns towards an increased consumption of high-energy products, including meat. Considering that the livestock sector is responsible for a significant percentage of the food industry's environmental impact, the search for other novel protein sources has launched a niche sector in the meat alternative industry. Edible insects possess an attractive nutritional profile, particularly due to their protein content, and generate a low environmental impact compared to traditional meat products. However, entomophagy (consuming insects as food), is not common in western societies. As consumer acceptance is a major challenge for the adoption of entomophagy, the purpose of this study is to analyze the willingness to consume insect-based food (IBF) in France and identify the factors that prevent or encourage entomophagy. An online questionnaire consisting of 46 questions was developed and administered using Qualtrics. Subjects (n=617) were surveyed for demographics, food neophobia, food disgust sensitivity, familiarity with entomophagy, knowledge about entomophagy, exposure to IBF, entomophagy experiences, motives and barriers of entomophagy, and willingness to consume IBF. Data were analyzed by difference tests, bivariate correlations, and multiple correspondence analysis. Results suggested that consumers between 18-30 years old have more knowledge about and exposure to entomophagy and are more willing to consume IBF. Repeated exposure to entomophagy decreased food neophobia and food disgust sensitivity and increased familiarity with entomophagy, insect-eating experiences, and willingness to consume IBF. Environmental sustainability, nutritional value, and flavor are important influencers of entomophagy that can be used to develop promotional strategies for IBF products in France