

MARKET RESEARCH IN ETHNIC COMMUNITY SHOWS RESTAURANTS WANT GOAT MEAT

BACKGROUND

This report is part of the Ethnic Markets Project, a SARE-funded collaboration of the Farming Alternatives Program at Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York City and Just Food, Inc. (a community-based group addressing local food and agriculture issues in the metropolitan area). The survey was conducted in 1997 through 1999 with assistance from Los Sures, a community organization in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York City.

The purpose of this research was to identify restaurants in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn which are interested in buying goat meat from New York producers. Williamsburg is multi-ethnic community comprised of Latinos, Italians, Poles, Jews, African Americans, and Caucasians. Residents have mainly low to moderate income. A list of restaurants was compiled through visual reconnaissance. Of the 15 restaurants identified, 8 agreed to be interviewed about their interest in goat meat. Interviews were scheduled and conducted during the summer of 1999. The following is a summary and conclusion followed by a question-by-question analysis of the interviews. We caution the reader that the sample is small and therefore the results are not generalizable to all restaurants.

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

The key findings of this marketing study of restaurants include the following.

- A strong economy is creating opportunities for the sales of goat (and lamb) even in low to moderate income areas of New York City like Williamsburg.
- Most of the Latino restaurants in the sample want goat meat, and some American style restaurants are also interested in experimenting with the product.
- Most of the restaurants which buy goat are only somewhat satisfied with their supplier.
- Most of the restaurants want to buy directly from the producers and do not see this as jeopardizing their relationship with their regular purveyors.
- The restaurants want whole or quartered carcasses; they pay a lower price and can customize the cuts themselves.
- They prefer fresh young goat meat and pay between \$1.56 and \$2.00 per lb. Over the course of the year.
- The majority of restaurants reported they would pay 25¢ more per pound for higher quality (fresher) meat.

- Five of the restaurants indicated they would work cooperatively with other restaurants to get a regular supply of goat meat.
- Most restaurants will pay COD and have a general preference for deliveries on any morning but Mondays.
- The restaurants which are not familiar with goat (mostly American style restaurants) would like samples of the different ages and cuts of meat.

The overall conclusion of this market study is that goat meat is in demand among a wide range of restaurants in Williamsburg, and that the potential exists for organizing a direct wholesale delivery route to service these businesses.

RESULTS

SECTION 1. GENERAL BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER INFORMATION

We would like to start by asking some general questions about this business:

1.1 What is your job title (e.g., owner, manager, supervisor, etc.)

| | |
|---------|---|
| Owner | 5 |
| Chef | 2 |
| Manager | 1 |

Most interviewees were owners, but others were empowered to speak with us.

1.2 Who makes inventory purchasing/ordering decisions?

All the respondents indicated that *THEY* do the ordering.

1.3 How is your business doing?

| 1-Growing | 2-Stable | 3-Struggling |
|-----------|----------|--------------|
| 5 | 2 | 1 |

Most restaurants are growing or stable, reflecting the robust economy in the city.

1.4 Which customer groups do you serve most? (Probe: Italian, Hasidic, African American, Mexican, Polish, Puerto Rican, Asian, etc.)

| | |
|----------|---------|
| American | 8 (40%) |
|----------|---------|

Latino 8 (40%)

European 4 (20%)

The restaurant market in Williamsburg reflects the cultural diversity of the community as a whole.

Note: The total number of responses is greater than 8 because the restaurants had multiple customer groups.

1.5 How would you describe your customers: (circle one)

1- Low-Income 2- Middle-Income 3- High-Income 4-Mixed-Income

0

2

0

6

The customer base of the sample is largely mixed income, but leaning toward middle and lower income.

SECTION 2. MEAT GOAT PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIERS

We are interested in understanding your relationship with your goat meat supplier, and how we might be able to bring better locally-raised goat meat to your business.

2.1 Do you currently get goat meat from a supplier?

YES 4 goat (and 1 lamb)

NO 3

Only Half the interviewees currently buy goat meat.

2.2 What is the name of the supplier?

The following are the suppliers, which the restaurants named:

Fort [Lee] Meat

Whitehouse

New Market, Western Beef (Manhattan)

Brooklyn, 21 St with 3rd and 4th Ave

Hunts Point

2.3 In general, how satisfied are you with your current supplier of goat/lambmeat? (Circle one)

1- Very Satisfied 2- Somewhat Satisfied 3- Not Satisfied 4- Not Sure

1

4

0

0

The restaurants were generally only somewhat satisfied by their current goat meat supplier.

2.4 What assurance do you have that the meat is really goat meat and not lamb or some other animal? (Probe: head on? USDA inspected, labeling, etc...)

USDA tag

Yellow tag

Taste/smell texture of meat

Taste

Head on

2.5 How do you prefer the meat to be prepared when it is delivered? (e.g., Whole carcass, quartered carcass, both meat and bones cut up/cubed, meat only cutup/cubed ground?).

Whole carcass 3

Quartered carcass 2

Hind (lamb) 1

Racks and bones 1

Restaurants interested in goat meat generally want whole or quartered carcasses.

2.6 Do you prefer the head: a. attached b. removed/included c. removed/not included

Attached 2

Remove/not included 4

Remove/included 0

Some restaurants want the head on to make maximum use of the animal, and to perhaps ensure that it is indeed goat they have purchased (it appears that lamb is sometimes sold as goat in NYC).

2.7 Does it come fresh or frozen?

FRESH FROZEN (Circle one)

5 0

All of the restaurants prefer fresh product.

2.8a Can you tell us how much you pay per pound?

highest price in a year \$_____ lowest price in a year \$_____

Average Highest

Average Lowest

\$2.00

\$1.56

Note: these are the average of only three restaurants.

2.8b Do you pay different price for different cuts? if so, tell us about the difference

Comments:

Buying the whole animal becomes cheaper/lb

Live animals are cheaper (\$2/lb) than slaughtered (\$4 to \$5/lb)

Ribs are more expensive than legs, also neck in cubes and ground meat are cheaper.

Racks are more expensive (\$3 to \$4/lb); with bones are cheaper (\$1.15 to \$1.50/lb)

Back half and lamb with bones is lower in prices

2.9 Would you be willing to pay 25¢ more per pound for fresher goat meat?

YES

NO

4 (if better quality)

2

Two-thirds of the restaurants would pay 25¢ more per pound for higher quality goat meat.

2.10 Would buying direct from the producer jeopardize the relationship you have with your regular supplier?

YES 1 NO 4

Buying direct from farmers generally does not threaten the restaurants' relationship with regular suppliers.

2.11 Would you be willing to cooperative with other retailers in the neighborhood to purchase goat meat?

YES 5 NO 1

Most restaurants would be willing to cooperate in their purchases of goat meat.

2.12a Do you have a sex preference? (probe: hembra, she goat, nanny goat, wether goat, steer goat, fixed goat, cut goat, chivo, macho, ramgoat, billy, buck, entire male, etc.)

Female 1

Castrated male 3

Uncastrated male 1

Don't know difference so would like to try all types 3

There appears to be a slight preference for male goats over females. Some restaurants are not familiar enough with goat meat that they have no preference.

2.12b What age goat do you prefer?

Suckling kid (cabrito) 4

Young goats (@ 50 to 80 lb. 4

liveweight with no mature teeth, e.g. still have all their milk teeth).

Mature goats 1

Mature lamb 1

Old goat 0

Most restaurants in the sample want young or kid goats.

2.12c What size carcass do you prefer? _____

Small/medium (e.g. 35-40lbs) 3

Medium about 50-80 lbs 2

Only racks of lamb 1

The restaurants indicated a preference for small to medium carcass sizes. *Note- there seems to be some confusion here on the part of surveyors on carcass weights versus live weight.*

2.12d For what dishes do most of your customers use goat? (probe: Easter dinner, cabrito, seco de chivo, curried goat, goat stew, spitted goat, etc.).

Comments:

Goat stew, pitted goat

Salsa/main course

Christmas

Burritos, tacos, catering

all year round (special occasions)

Leg/rack of lamb

2.13 Would you be interested in live animals?

YES 1 NO 7

Most restaurants are not interested in live animals. Two indicated an interest in visiting the farm and one said that he would like to choose the animal.

2.14 What payment terms do you prefer? (e.g., net 30/60 days)

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Cash on delivery | 3 |
| Cash on Delivery or weekly | 1 |
| Cash on delivery or bill-to-bill | 2 |
| 30 days | 1 |

COD is the preferred method of payment for most restaurants with some flexibility.

2.15 What delivery schedule do you prefer?

| DAY | TIME |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Tuesday and Friday | 8 am to 11 am |
| Tuesday to Sunday | 9 am to 6pm |

Tuesday to Friday

after 12 PM

Thursday and Friday

Mornings

Tuesdays through Fridays mornings are generally the preferred delivery days and times.

2.16 Are there any products that your customers demand that you find difficult to get?

YES 1 (lambs feet) NO 5

2.17 If you were interested in fresher goat meat what type of supplier would you prefer to get IT from? [check all that apply below]

___ a) EXISTING Distributor/Wholesaler

___ b) EXISTING Broker

___8_ c) Direct from farmers

___ d) Hunts Point

___ e) Bronx Terminal Market

___ f) Does not matter

Remarkably, all the restaurants interviewed preferred to get goat/(lamb) meat directly from the producer.

2.18 Do you have any other comments to make about the products that you carry or would like to carry?

The owners of some of the restaurants (who are not familiar with goat meat but they are very interested in participating in the project) are asking for samples of the different cuts and types of meats, so they can know the different textures and how to prepare them.