

# **How consumers link traceability to food quality and safety: An international investigation.**

Wendy van Rijswijk and Lynn J. Frewer

Wageningen University, Marketing and Consumer Behaviour, P.O. Box 8130, 6700 EW Wageningen, Netherlands, phone: +31 317- 482455, fax: + 31 317-484361, email: Wendy.vanRijswijk@wur.nl or Lynn.Frewer@wur.nl

## **Abstract**

It is not yet understood whether the implementation of traceability systems can contribute towards restoring consumer confidence in food quality and safety, one of the goals of the European Food Law. To date, little is known about how consumers perceive the role and potential impact of traceability within the supply chain. This paper aims to provide insight into how traceability information can offer guarantees of food quality and safety, and contribute towards increased consumer confidence. Data, collected in four EU countries, examines salient cognitions and attitudes that underpin consumer beliefs about product traceability that will influence their decision making. It will link traceability-related food attributes to perceived benefits and important consumer values. Furthermore, variations between different consumers are examined to illustrate how the concepts of food safety and food quality may have different meanings and consequences in the various European countries. Understanding which benefits consumers associate with traceability will assist in providing consumers with traceability information in line with their requirements.

**Keywords:** traceability, consumer perception, food safety, food quality

**Acknowledgement:** this paper results from research carried out within the framework of the European Commission funded TRACE project, contract 006942.