

Table 3.2. Consumer ratings of selected characteristics of goat and beef.

| Characteristic | Mean ratings ^a | |
|----------------|---------------------------|------|
| | Goat | Beef |
| Smell | 6.12 ^b | 5.72 |
| Overall taste | 5.94 | 5.80 |
| Overall appeal | 5.69 | 5.67 |

^aRatings are based upon a numeric scale where 10 is excellent and 0 is extremely poor.

^bPaired t-tests were used to compare mean ratings for goat and beef. Superscripts are placed on mean values nearest the ideal rating of 3 where the differences between ratings for goat and beef were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3.3. Suitability of goat and beef barbeque for selected types of meats

| Meal type | Mean ratings ^a | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------|
| | Goat | Beef |
| Occasional family meal, at home | 5.18 | 5.28 |
| Special meal for friends | 4.63 | 4.60 |
| Restaurant meal | 4.60 | 4.55 |

^aRatings are based upon a numeric scale where 10 is excellent and 0 is extremely poor. Paired t-tests were used to compare goat and beef ratings for each type of meal. None were statistically significant at the 0.05 probability level.

Respondents were also asked to rate the suitability of the two products for an occasional family meal served at home, as a special meal for friends, and as a restaurant meal. Ratings for goat and beef were very similar for all three types of meals. It appears that both products were viewed as being more acceptable for family at-home meals than for special entertaining or as restaurant meals (Table 3.3).

Prior to being told what two types of meat they had evaluated, respondents were asked whether or not they would buy products similar to the samples in a restaurant or in a retail food store. Slightly over half said they would buy the goat barbecue in a restaurant, 46 percent said they would not, and three percent were undecided. Fewer respondents were willing to buy the beef. Forty-seven percent indicated a willingness to buy the beef, virtually the same percentage was unwilling, with nearly six percent undecided (Table 3.4). Nearly two-thirds of all respondents were willing to buy both the goat and the beef for an at-home meal, while approximately one-third were unwilling (Table 3.4).

After the blind (unidentified) product evaluations had been completed, respondents were told that one product was goat and one was beef. Only 51 percent correctly identified goat, 41 percent incorrectly

identified the beef as goat, and 8 percent were unsure. Only 25 percent of all respondents had previously eaten goat meat. The product evaluations tended to confirm our initial hypothesis: that goat meat, properly prepared, would compare very favorably with beef.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our research indicated that goat meat, when barbecued under commercial foodservice conditions and evaluated by consumers under "blind" conditions, compares very favorably to beef. However, in the real world, few people eat "mystery meat." Identifying the barbecued product as "goat meat" would likely have mixed effects on consumers. Because of negative images of goats or goat meat, some consumers would be totally repulsed; others would probably be favorably predisposed toward the product because of positive associations with goat's milk. Based upon consumers' reaction to the terms "goat meat," "cabrito" and "chevron," "goat meat" is viewed much more negatively than the other two terms. As a consequence, leaders in the goat industry should strive to use "cabrito," "chevon," or some other fanciful name in lieu of "goat." Additionally, educational and public relations programs should also portray goats as clean, useful producers of healthful meat and milk products instead of cute, cuddly pets.