

IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE  
CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR THE CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD SECTOR  
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À LA CROISÉE DES CHEMINS:  
LES DÉFIS À VENIR POUR LE SECTEUR AGROALIMENTAIRE CANADIEN

ABSTRACT 9

**Farm Animal Welfare in Canada – How Vanishing Knowledge about  
Agriculture, Values and Labelling Affect Public Perceptions and  
Shopping Behaviours**

Presenter: Anita Ahiney Laryea

Supervisor: Dr. Sven Anders

Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology, University of Alberta

Consumers have become very concerned over the origins and processes by which their food is produced and delivered to retail. The welfare of farm animals (FAW) is an example of an important credence production attribute and at the heart of public concerns that pose challenges particularly to the livestock industry. Research in Europe and the United States has shown that society places a value on FAW. Studies have shown that livestock and agricultural knowledge; beliefs, personal values and attitudes affect individual's perceptions of FAW at retail. Information and labelling of FAW influence retail purchasing decisions. However, little is known about the state of FAW in Canada, how the above factors affect public concerns and the likelihood of purchase of FAW labelled product innovations in the Canadian market.

My research examines the value Canadians place on FAW: Are Canadian consumers' willing to pay more for improvements in FAW? How do meat consumers differ in their evaluation of FAW? To what extent do farm(ing) experience, knowledge of agriculture, personal value systems and beliefs affect Canadians FAW concerns? Is there a (niche) market for humanely raised meat in Canada? What is the role of labelling in influencing purchase decisions? To achieve these objectives a national online survey and integrated discrete choice experiment will be used. Understanding the impact consumer value systems and social norms play in consumer behaviour and major consumption trends (e.g. sustainability) will aid livestock producers in responding to changing market demands and public opinion about livestock agriculture in Canada and has important implications for Canadian food policy.