

Abstracts

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Trends in Consumer Concerns Regarding Food-related Risks Between 1992 and 1994 in Germany. ULRICH OLTERSDORF, REINHILD BENTERBUSCH and HANS JOACHIM ULRICH. *Institute of Nutritional Economics and Sociology, Federal Research Centre of Nutrition, D-70577 Stuttgart, Germany.*

There is an ongoing controversy about the perception of food-related risks and provision of proper information. While experts state that there is an excellent standard of food quality

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and that faulty dealing with foods ranks as the highest hazard, German people mostly fear "chemicals in foods". In order to investigate this complex information process, the Institute monitors German mass media (newspapers, magazines, TV) regarding food- and nutrition-related issues and, since 1992, trends in food-related consumer concerns by annual surveys. The results of these consecutive surveys indicate that nutrition-related concerns are rather stable. Overall they are higher in West Germany, but people in East Germany tend to adjust their perception, e.g. in 1994 they classified risks related to pesticides almost as highly as western people. Risks due to spoiled foods were ranked high in 1992, probably because of numerous media reports on Salmonellosis during that time; unfortunately this rating reversed subsequently. Risks attributed to gene technology in foods are increasing continuously. In conclusion, much has to be done in nutritional communication in order to improve the unsatisfactory perception of food-related risks.

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Series Coordinator (to whom all correspondence should be addressed): David Booth, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, U.K.