

Title: The Socio-Economic Impact of Fraudulent Practices on Agri-Food Products: An Analysis of Dairy Products

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Introduction

Fraudulent practices in food have been a practice since the times of Ancient Greece and Rome. For higher economic gain and lower costs, producers modify the product packaging, its ingredient, or the food product itself. By definition, food fraud consists of the deliberate and intentional replacement, fraudulent manipulation, or adulteration of foods, food ingredients, or food packaging (Robson et al., 2021).

Methodology

The research focused on assessing consumer awareness of fraud in dairy products, the prevalence of counterfeit consumption, and the common methods of falsification. Objectives included understanding why consumers choose counterfeit products and developing strategies to combat such fraud. Hypotheses posited that a high percentage of respondents had consumed counterfeit products, few took preventive measures, and many were influenced by price. The study utilized a standardized questionnaire distributed via popular social media platforms in Romania to gather data, which was then analyzed using Microsoft Excel.



Results and discussion

Dairy product fraud in Romania presents both economic and social challenges, highlighted by significant consumer awareness of fraudulent practices - over 70% of respondents are familiar with these issues. Despite this awareness, only about 55% recognize the existence of counterfeit dairy products, suggesting a gap in consumer education and the need for more sophisticated detection and prevention measures. Many consumers are attracted to counterfeit products due to lower prices, emphasizing the need for competitive pricing of authentic products to discourage fraudulent purchase.



Conclusions

Following the analysis based on the questionnaire, it was concluded that in Romania, consumers are not informed about fraudulent maneuvers on dairy products, and the majority of respondents consider that they have not been victims of this phenomenon. Also, they do not pay particular attention to the label or details that could be added or missing from it. However, they are aware of their rights, the authority to which they should report, and how to act in case they are involved in a situation involving fraudulent maneuvers.

