

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION: ALBANIAN CONSUMER'S KNOWLEDGE AND FOREMOST SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Abstract

The present paper is focused into the ethics of Albanian consumer's behavior in the market, their knowledge about agro-food products produced considering ethical issues and channels of information about them. Ethical products refer to the consumer's behavior of purchasing products and services produced in a way that minimizes social, animal welfare and/or environmental impacts, while avoiding (boycott of) products and services considered having a negative impact on the three dimensions. Consumers that consider ethical issues in their consumption try to harmonize their concern about ethics with the concern for nutrition facts, food safety and the price of the products. Having an active role in the market, consumers and their preferences are important for the fate and share of ethical products in the market. From the other side, their education is important for an ethical driven behavior. The organic, fair-trade and typical/traditional/local agro-food products were ethical products object of the study. The objective was to understand the state of Albanian consumers knowledge about ethical products, their attitude toward them and channels of information they use and would prefer to use for their information. Information was collected by face-to-face interviews with 311 adult Albanian consumers concentrated mainly in the central, south-eastern, south-western and northern part of Albania. Data about consumer's attitude toward ethical agro-food products, their knowledge and channels of information they prefer were object of the descriptive analyses. For most of the Albanian consumers, the ethical consumption means to buy products from organic agriculture, direct from the farm and/or traditional/local ones and only almost a quarter of them think that they contribute to the environment. Most of the Albanian consumers declare they have knowledge about ethical products: sources of knowledge and channels of information are electronic mass media in the first place followed by education, friends, printed media and specialized shops. They prefer to have more knowledge and information about ethical products: in the first place the preferred channels of information and education were mass-media followed by selling points and labels. The businesses and consumer's associations can have an active role in education and transparency. Despite this, the policymakers should play an active role in standards, control and support of projects related to informal and formal education.

Key words: *ethics, agro-food, consumer, attitude, knowledge, Albania.*