

Consumer & Market Insights Research Programme

Food for Health



For information on the Food Marketing Research Unit's (FMRU) Consumer & Market Insights Research Programme, please contact:

Dr. Maeve Henchion
Food Marketing Research Unit
Ashtown Food Research Centre, Teagasc
Ashtown
Dublin 15, Ireland

Tel: +353-1-8059515

Email: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

National Food Consumption Databases for Food Safety and Nutrition	p3
An Econometric Analysis of the Impact of Economic Change on Food Expenditure in Ireland and the Attitudinal and Behavioural Determinants of Food Choice and Health in Irish Adults	p4
Healthy Eating & Food Related Lifestyle Segments (FRL)	p5

Project Title: National Food Consumption Databases for Food Safety and Nutrition

Duration: 2008-2012

Funding: Food Institutional Research Measure

Partners: Albert Flynn, Mary McCarthy, Ivan Perry (UCC), Mike Gibney (UCD),
Barbara Livingstone (UU)

Project Description:

Research on food consumption and health is needed to ensure that the development and implementation of policy for food safety and nutrition at national and EU level is strongly evidence-based and reflects national needs, and to underpin innovation and competitiveness in the Irish food industry. The overall objective of this multi-disciplinary research project is to establish for the Republic of Ireland (ROI) nationally representative databases of food consumption in adults and preschool children, to complement existing recent data on schoolchildren and teens. The research will generate nationally representative data on food consumption, nutrient intake and status, body weight, blood pressure, and determinants of food choices and lifestyle behaviours. The main objective of the consumer insight and behaviour element of this research project is to identify psychological, social and attitudinal determinants of food choice and eating behaviour in children aged 1-4 years, and in adults aged 18 years and over.

A food choice questionnaire will be administered to the nationally representative sample of 1500 respondents aged 18 years and over participating in the overall study, which will identify the motivations for, and barriers against, healthy lifestyles. Qualitative in-depth interviews will also be conducted with over 150 respondents to explore their thoughts, motivations and emotions associated with their food choice decisions. This multi-disciplinary research will provide an important base of scientific knowledge to address nutrition and food safety issues of relevance to public health policy in such areas as healthy eating initiatives and prevention strategies for obesity and diet-related chronic illnesses. From a commercial perspective, this research will provide a strong scientific and consumer behaviour platform to address the needs of the Irish food industry in terms of the technical development and strategic marketing of health and wellness foods.

Contacts: Sinead McCarthy, FMRU: sinead.mccarthy@teagasc.ie

Maeve Henchion, FMRU: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie

Project Title: An Econometric Analysis of the Impact of Economic Change on Food Expenditure in Ireland and the Attitudinal and Behavioural Determinants of Food Choice and Health in Irish Adults

Duration: 2008-2012

Funding: Health Research Board

Partners: Mary McCarthy (UCC), Pat Wall (UCD), Barbara Stewart Knox (UU)

Project Description:

The rapid growth of the Irish economy has impacted dramatically on the lifestyles of Irish people due to many factors including increased disposable income, increased commuting and working times, and changes to family structures. However, the impact of these changes on the health behaviour of the Irish population is poorly defined. In particular, there is a paucity of reliable data on the nature and magnitude of the impact of economic change on food choice in Ireland. Thus, the focus of this research is to address this gap in knowledge and provide an insight into the impact of economic change on food expenditure in Ireland, as well as the attitudinal and behavioural determinants of food choice and health in Irish adults.

Existing datasets will be explored to provide a perspective on the Irish economic experience and its impact on patterns of food choice. The Household Budget Surveys (HBS) will be explored to analyse the impact of economic changes that have occurred over the last two decades in Ireland on patterns of food choice. This will involve an econometrics analysis of food expenditures of households across time. The HBS analyses will be complemented with an examination of the relationships between eating behaviour, attitudes to food and health in relation to actual dietary behaviour and anthropometric health using data from the North/South Ireland Food Consumption Survey of adults (NSIFCS). It is anticipated that the results will assist in determining the differential impact of economic, psychological, social and cultural factors upon consumer attitudes to food, health and obesity related issues and inform subsequent research and interventions on how best to promote healthy eating.

Contacts: Sinead McCarthy, FMRU: sinead.mccarthy@teagasc.ie

Maeve Henchion, FMRU: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie

Project Title: Healthy Eating & Food Related Lifestyle Segments (FRL)

Duration: 2007-2010

Funding: Teagasc Walsh Fellowship Programme

Partners: Mary McCarthy (UCC)

Project Description:

The health and wellness market offers new product opportunities to those companies that understand consumers' preferences and choice motives, and can develop and market products that meet consumers' expectations. The translation of scientific insights into consumer-relevant innovations therefore requires a fundamental understanding of consumers' perceptions of food, nutrition and health. By gathering information on specific groups of consumers using a health-oriented adaptation of Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) instrument, targeted initiatives that are congruent with the individual's food lifestyle can be developed. The overall objective of this research is to investigate if differences exist in the health related beliefs, social norms, attitudes and behaviours of the various population FRL segments in Ireland. The more specific objectives of this research are: to conduct an assessment of FRL segments to identify the degree to which these lifestyles are impacting on healthy eating; to revise the existing FRL instrument to incorporate health segments; and to identify various types of healthy eating solutions that best suit the food lifestyles of each segment identified.

Qualitative research using the focus group methodology will initially investigate consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards healthy eating, and guide the development of a Health Food Lifestyle (HFL) instrument. Following this, a nationally representative sample of 1000 consumers will be surveyed in Ireland using the newly developed HFL instrument. This research will contribute to a greater understanding of food consumers' motivations and choices. This will help industry develop new products and appropriate marketing strategies to capitalise on consumers' increased awareness of diet and nutrition, and importantly, to address the challenge of responsible marketing and consumption of health and wellness foods. Finally, given the significance of innovation to organisational performance and long-term profitability, consumer insight techniques that advance both a firm's understanding of consumers' choice motives and value systems, and its knowledge management process, can improve the chances of new product success.

Contacts: Sinead McCarthy, FMRU: sinead.mccarthy@teagasc.ie

Maeve Henchion, FMRU: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie