CONSUMER PREFERENCES SURVEY
FOR
HARRISON’S COUNTRY HAMS

Prepared for

Mr. Phillip Niffen
Director of Marketing
Harrison’s Country Hams

Prepared by

Sandra Moreno
Consumer Consultant

Market Research, Inc.
5600 West Broadway
Ruder-Fine Building, Suite 21A
St. Louis, MO 63100-2182

October 15, 199-
A title fly is sometimes used in reports. The title fly may be a blank sheet of paper or may state the title of the report, as in this example. (Note: title flies are not discussed in this text.)

CONSUMER PREFERENCES SURVEY
FOR
HARRISON’S COUNTRY HAMS
June 20, 199-

Ms. Sandra Moreno, Consumer Consultant
Market Research, Inc.
5600 West Broadway
Ruder-Fine Building, Suite 21A
St. Louis, MO 63100-2182

Dear Ms. Moreno:

Subject: Authorization for Consumer Preferences Study

You are authorized to study consumer preferences for country hams in the Kansas City, Missouri, area. The purposes of your study are

1. To provide a description of country ham consumers.
2. To analyze consumer perceptions of Harrison’s country hams as compared to the competition.
3. To determine if the present Harrison’s packaging is satisfactory for consumers.
4. To help Harrison’s increase its market share of ham sales by recommending media vehicles and advertising strategy.

I recommend that you survey shoppers who are entering large supermarket chain stores in Kansas City and its suburbs. Your sample should be randomly drawn.

As we have agreed, a consulting fee of $7,500 will be paid to Market Research, Inc., on the successful completion of this study and the submission of an acceptable report. Harrison’s may authorize additional consumer preference surveys in other geographical areas if the results of this study seem worthwhile.

Your report should be submitted to me by October 30, 199-. Please contact me if you need any further information or guidance from Harrison’s.

Sincerely,

Phillip Niffen
Director of Marketing

...
October 15, 199-

Mr. Phillip Niffen
Director of Marketing
Harrison's Country Hams
1000 Pork Lane
Kansas City, MO 64100-8462

Dear Mr. Niffen:

Here is the report you requested on consumer preferences for country hams in the Kansas City, Missouri, area.

We surveyed 100 randomly selected grocery shoppers to determine who buys country hams, how consumers perceive Harrison’s hams as compared to the competition, what opinions consumers have on Harrison’s packaging, and how Harrison’s could increase its market share.

The survey results show that Harrison’s country hams are purchased predominantly by high school graduates with less than $30,000 in income and who have a preference for country music. Consumers who have tried and liked Harrison’s think it is a high-quality ham and a good value. Consumers who disliked Harrison’s country ham said that its price is too high. Consumers prefer clear packaging to the present white paper packaging.

Based on these survey findings, we recommend a strengthened marketing strategy directed at a more affluent consumer, increased television and radio advertising with a country music orientation, and a change to clear plastic shrink packaging.

Thank you for the opportunity to complete this market research for Harrison’s. I hope that you find the results valuable and that you will authorize additional, similar studies in other market areas. I am convinced that by doing so you will increase your market share.

Cordially,

Sandra Moreno
Consumer Consultant
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To increase its market share, Harrison’s Country Hams requested that Market Research, Inc., conduct a consumer preferences survey in the Kansas City, Missouri, area. The study was designed to describe the country ham consumer, analyze country ham consumer preferences, determine the adequacy of Harrison’s packaging, and recommend improvements in Harrison’s media vehicles and advertising strategy. One hundred consumers entering supermarkets were randomly selected and interviewed.

A related literature review showed that household incomes of country ham consumers increased 54 percent between 1988 and 1998, indicating the development of an upscale market. Further, research on packaging found that meat consumers prefer to see meat prior to its purchase.

The survey revealed that country ham consumers predominantly were married high school graduates between 25 and 44 years of age. They had one to two children in a family of three to four. They lived in the suburbs and one-half preferred country music. Approximately one-third of the consumers usually buy Harrison’s country hams, and about one-half had eaten Harrison’s. Of the consumers who had eaten Harrison’s, those who liked it thought it had good taste and was a good value. Those who disliked it thought its price was too high and it had too much salt.

In addition, the survey found that Harrison’s consumers preferred clear plastic packaging, but a significant number did not like the current pig logo. Only one-third of Harrison’s consumers earn more than $30,000, suggesting an untapped upscale market. Most had seen or heard Harrison’s advertisements on television or radio. City dwellers were more likely to have seen the ads on television, whereas suburbanites heard them on radio.

The analysis of the findings revealed that (1) Harrison’s current consumers were from predominantly low-income households, (2) its hams had good taste and value, (3) advertising should target the upscale market, and (4) television and radio were the most successful media.

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that Harrison’s marketing strategy should focus on the superior taste and quality of its country hams, Harrison’s advertising should be directed at the upscale market, the advertising should be primarily on television and radio with a country music orientation, and Harrison’s packaging should be clear plastic shrink wrapping with a modified pig logo.
I. INTRODUCTION

This introductory section includes the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purposes of the study, and scope of the study.

Background
Harrison’s Country Hams was interested in increasing its market share. In consultation with Market Research, Inc., Harrison’s decided to have a consumer preferences survey conducted in the Kansas City, Missouri, area. Other similar studies will be conducted if this study is deemed helpful.

Statement of the Problem
The focus of this study was to determine (1) selected attributes and preferences of country ham consumers and (2) improvements that could be made in Harrison’s product packaging and promotion.

Purposes of the Study
The purposes of this study were as follows:

• To provide a description of country ham consumers.
• To analyze consumer perceptions of Harrison’s country hams as compared to the competition.
• To determine if the present Harrison’s packaging is adequate for consumers.
• To help Harrison’s increase its market share of ham sales by recommending media vehicles and advertising strategy.

Scope
The scope of this study included analyses of country ham consumers, consumer country ham eating habits and preferences, and Harrison’s competition. The study was limited to the Kansas City, Missouri, market area.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

The literature on studies of consumer product preferences is extensive. Although this broad expanse of research was generally helpful, two recent studies of consumers were found to be especially valuable for this study.

In a 1998 study by Paula Brockway, it was found that, in constant dollars, the average household income of country ham consumers had increased significantly over the past 10 years. In 1988, the average household income of country ham consumers was $15,543. In 1998, that income level had risen to $26,939, a 54 percent increase over the 1988 level. Brockway’s conclusion was that country ham merchandisers should target more of their advertising to the upscale market levels.

In 1997, William Seale surveyed consumers’ preferences on the packaging of fresh meat and found that consumers wanted to be able to see the meat prior to purchase. Clear plastic shrink wrapping was preferred to unwrapped meat or opaque packaging.
III. PROCEDURES

A survey was conducted using a sampling technique to ensure randomization in the respondents. It was determined statistically that a sample of 100 grocery shoppers would provide a .05 precision and 95 percent confidence level. The procedures followed included these:

1. A questionnaire was developed that contained simple dichotomous questions, check list questions, open-ended questions, and a semantic differential scale. (See Appendix.)
2. Teams of interviewers were stationed at five large supermarket chain stores located in the Kansas City area.
3. Interviews were conducted over a three-day period—Friday through Sunday—beginning on August 25, 199-.
4. Every 25th adult consumer entering the store was approached for an interview. If the interview was rejected, then the request was repeated of the next available consumer until one was willing to be interviewed.
5. The data were tabulated using a computerized statistical package, SPSS-X.
6. The results were analyzed by a team of Market Research consumer consultants and this report prepared.

IV. FINDINGS

These findings are presented using the study objectives as a framework. The following sections include information about demographic information describing country ham consumers, consumer perceptions of Harrison’s compared to the competition, consumer perceptions of packaging, and information on the market and media.

Country Ham Consumers

The demographic information collected for the study—from musical preference to household income—provides a detailed description of country ham consumers. The presentation of these findings is shown in Figures 1 through 8 that follow.

As indicated in Figure 1, 73 percent of the respondents were married. Figure 2 shows that 12 percent of country ham consumers have some high school education, and 40 percent ended their formal education when they graduated from high school. The remaining respondents reported that they had some college (38 percent), or were college graduates (10 percent). A total of 88 percent have at least a high school education.
Seventy-eight percent were 25 years of age or older, with 56 percent 25 to 44, and 22 percent 45 and over. (See Figure 3.) As shown in Figure 4, most of the respondents (69 percent) had one to two children under the age of 18.

Figure 5 shows that 65 percent of the respondents’ family size was three to four persons. As indicated in Figure 6, most (54 percent) lived in the suburbs.

Figure 7 shows that half (50 percent) preferred country music. Seventy-five percent, as shown in Figure 8, had household incomes of less than $30,000.

In summary, country ham consumers predominantly were married high school graduates between 25 and 44 years of age. They had one to two children in a family of three to four. They lived in the suburbs and one-half preferred country music. Only one-fourth had household incomes of more than $30,000 per year.
Harrison’s and the Competition

As shown in Figure 9, almost one-third (32 percent) of the respondents usually choose Harrison’s country hams over the competitors’ hams, whereas Figure 10 shows that almost half (49 percent) have eaten Harrison’s ham.

Of the consumers who had eaten Harrison’s country hams, we asked what they liked and disliked about the product. As shown in Figure 11, the responses of those who liked it reveal that almost two-thirds (63 percent) thought it had good taste and about one-third (32 percent) thought it was a good value. Figure 12 shows that one-half of the respondents who disliked Harrison’s country ham (50 percent) said it was because of high price. Most remaining respondents thought either Harrison’s had too much salt (35 percent) or not enough salt (11 percent).

Packaging Preferences

As indicated in Figure 13, 51 percent of the consumers preferred clear plastic packaging. Only 39 percent liked the present Harrison’s white paper packaging. Figure 14 shows that over one-third of the respondents (35 percent) did not like Harrison’s pig logo.
Some of the specific responses of those who said they liked the Harrison pig logo were “OK,” “Cute,” and “Gets good attention.” Those who disliked the logo, however, commented “Could be better,” “Offensive,” and “Unfavorable association of the food with a pig’s rear end.”

Figure 11. LIKE HARRISON’S HAM

Figure 12. DISLIKE HARRISON’S HAM

Figure 13. PACKAGING PREFERRED

Figure 14. LOGO OPINION

Market and Media

Cross tabulations were run to provide additional market and media information for determining media vehicles and marketing strategy for Harrison’s Country Hams.

Market. Table 1 shows a statistically significant difference in the number of consumers who had eaten Harrison’s by level of household income.

Of those who had eaten Harrison’s country hams, only 33 percent had household incomes of more than $30,000. The less-affluent consumers appeared to constitute the larger current market segment for Harrison’s.

Media. A second set of significantly different responses were found in the cross tabulations for advertising media. Table 2 shows that 77 percent of the respondents who had seen or heard a Harrison’s advertisement
TABLE 1. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EATEN HARRISON’S COUNTRY HAM, BY LEVEL OF INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Household Income</th>
<th>Had Eaten Harrison’s Ham</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $29,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 and above</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD SEEN OR HEARD HARRISON’S ADVERTISEMENTS, BY TYPE OF ADVERTISEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Advertisement</th>
<th>Had Seen or Heard Harrison’s Ads</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD SEEN HARRISON’S ADVERTISEMENTS ON TELEVISION, BY RESIDENCE LOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence Location</th>
<th>Saw Harrison’s Ads on Television</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside city limits</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In suburbs</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

had seen it on television (38 percent) or heard it on radio (39 percent). Billboard advertisements were seen by only 11 percent and other advertisements accounted for only 12 percent. Table 3 shows that 62 percent of those who had seen Harrison’s Country Hams’ advertisements on television lived within the city limits. As shown in Table 4, however, 77 percent of those who had heard Harrison’s advertisements on radio lived in suburbs.
TABLE 4. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD HEARD HARRISON’S ADVERTISEMENTS ON RADIO, BY RESIDENCE LOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence Location</th>
<th>Heard Harrison’s Ads on Radio</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside city limits</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In suburbs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, television was more effective in reaching city dwellers, whereas radio was superior in reaching residents of the suburbs.

V. ANALYSIS

Country ham consumers in the Kansas City area tended to be educated and married with established family units. These consumers, however, also tended to have relatively low household incomes—only 25 percent had incomes of $30,000 or more. Brockway, reporting a 54 percent increase in average income of country ham consumers between 1988 and 1998, concluded in her April 1998 article in *The Grocery Retailer* that country ham merchandisers should target more of their advertising at the upscale market levels. Harrison’s current market mix (33 percent with over $30,000 incomes) does not now include its potential share of the upscale market segment.

This study found that most consumers who had eaten Harrison’s country ham and liked it thought it had good taste and was a good value. Those who disliked Harrison’s, however, did so primarily because of its high price.

Since this study found that most of Harrison’s consumers are from the less-affluent segment of the country ham market, a greater effort to reach the untapped higher income households should be profitable. With Harrison’s high-quality product, price should not be a sales barrier in this upscale market.

In addition, this study shows clearly that most consumers had seen or heard a Harrison’s advertisement on television or radio versus other media. Consumers who live in Kansas City were more likely to have seen Harrison’s advertisements on television, and those who lived in the suburbs heard them on radio. Television and radio are obviously the most successful media for Harrison’s. A further media consideration is that one-half of the country ham consumers preferred country music over other types of music.

Finally, both this study and Seale’s study (as reported in his May 1997 article in *Retail Merchandising*) found that most meat purchasers do not like opaque packaging. The consumers preferred clear plastic packaging of meats, including country hams. Further, a significant number of consumers surveyed for this study—35 percent—disliked the pig logo Harrison’s uses on its packaging.
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions
1. Harrison’s current consumers in the Kansas City area tend to come predominantly from low-income households.
2. Harrison’s country ham is considered to have good taste and to be a good value. Its price is considered high.
3. Harrison’s is not reaching its potential share of the upscale marketing segment.
4. Television and radio are the most successful advertising media for Harrison’s.
5. Country ham consumers tend to prefer country music.
6. Harrison’s packaging and logo should be changed.

Recommendations
1. Harrison’s marketing strategy should advertise its product as superior in both taste and quality in comparison to its competition. Harrison’s should promote its product as the “Cadillac” of country hams and aim for a more prestigious image.
2. An increased share of Harrison’s advertising content should be directed at appealing to the affluent consumer who is willing and able to pay a higher price for a high-quality product.
3. A greater proportion of Harrison’s advertising budget should be spent on television and radio programming with a country music orientation so as to reach more country ham consumers.
4. Harrison’s should go to clear plastic shrink packaging as soon as feasible to make its hams more visible. To help reduce consumer dissatisfaction, the pig logo should gradually be changed in appearance to show more of a side view of the pig instead of the straight rear view.
APPENDIX

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

An appendix contains supportive, supplementary material that is related to the study.
HARRISON’S CONSUMER PREFERENCES SURVEY

Hello, I am _______________________________ with Market Research, Inc., and I am doing a survey for Harrison’s Country Hams. May I ask you a few questions?

1. Are you responsible for most of the grocery shopping for your household?
   ( ) yes  ( ) no [if no, terminate]

2. For each of the following characteristics, how would you describe country ham? (Check the space describing how you feel.)
   Characteristic
   A. Taste  _____ Tasty  _____ Not tasty
   B. Nutritional value  _____ Healthy  _____ Not healthy
   C. Price  _____ Inexpensive  _____ Expensive
   D. Packaging  _____ Important  _____ Not important

3. What brand of country ham do you usually buy? (Specify.)

___________________________________________________________________________________

4. Have you ever eaten a Harrison’s country ham?
   ( ) yes  ( ) no

5. If your answer to question 4 is yes, please state what you liked or disliked about Harrison’s country hams.

___________________________________________________________________________________

6. Harrison’s country ham is currently sold in a white paper package like this one (show wrapping to consumer). It could also be sold with a clear plastic cover, or a cloth mesh cover. Which would you most prefer?
   ( ) present white paper  ( ) clear plastic cover
   ( ) cloth mesh cover  ( ) other ____________________________________________

7. Have you ever seen or heard a Harrison’s advertisement?
   ( ) yes  ( ) no

8. If your answer to question 7 is yes, where?
   ( ) TV  ( ) radio  ( ) billboard  ( ) other ________________________________

9. What do you like or dislike about the Harrison’s Country Hams logo? (Show them the logo of the pig—a direct rear view of a pig who is looking back and smiling at the viewer.) ________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________
10. What type of music do you prefer?
   ( ) country  ( ) rock  ( ) pop
   ( ) blues  ( ) other ____________________________

11. Which age category best fits you?
   ( ) 24 and under  ( ) 25–44
   ( ) 45–64  ( ) 65 and over

12. Which family size category best fits you?
   ( ) 1 to 2  ( ) 3 to 4  ( ) 5 or more

13. Are you married?
   ( ) yes  ( ) no

14. How many of the children in your household are under 18?
   ( ) 0  ( ) 1 to 2  ( ) 3 or more

15. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
   ( ) attended grade school  ( ) attended some high school
   ( ) high school graduate  ( ) attended some college
   ( ) college graduate

16. Which household total income category best fits your household?
   ( ) Under $10,000  ( ) $10,000–$19,999
   ( ) $20,000–$29,999  ( ) $30,000–$39,999
   ( ) $40,000 and above
The bibliography is a list of all the references that were used as sources of information in the study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
