

## Drivers of Demand for Animal-Source Foods in Low-Income Informal Settlements in Nairobi, Kenya

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### Key Takeaways

- Cost and satiety were key drivers of food choice and households often incorporated animal-source foods (ASFs) that were filling and cheap into their diets within the limits of what they could afford.
- Social desirability and peer pressure were also drivers of demand for ASFs, particularly if a household was hosting guests or celebrating special occasions.
- Gender norms dictated that women were primarily responsible for purchasing decisions and preparation of ASFs, while men tended to consume greater portions of ASFs than other household members.
- The cost and availability of different types of cooking fuel drove food choices, with some households choosing ASFs requiring less fuel while others purchased fuels based on the time, they wished to spend cooking.
- Religious beliefs (Catholic, Akorino, or Muslim) as well as cultural ceremonies (rites of passage, bride price, ritual slaughtering, and entry into certain social groups) required consumption of specific parts of certain ASFs.
- Food safety concerns regarding sourcing and handling along the supply chain, such as the presence of preservatives in processed foods, influenced food choices
- Retailer qualities (e.g., presentability, prices, quality, and perceived safety) influenced participants' decision-making and positive personal relationships with vendors allowed for purchases on credit
- Most households preferred to purchase red meat at abattoirs or known butcheries whenever possible due to known inspection protocols to ensure food safety and quality.

### Objectives

The overall project objective was to investigate supply and demand for animal-source foods (ASFs) to understand the source of variability in ASF intake between and within households residing in Nairobi's informal settlements.

### Background

In LMICs, ASFs such as meat, fish, dairy, chicken and eggs, are a critical source of protein, particularly for women and children who are at high risk of malnutrition. The urban poor in Kenya purchase most of their foods from informal markets and do not have consistent access to affordable ASFs. While prices and income are key barriers to demand, other factors such as access, taste, perceived nutritional

value, and food safety are also important food choice considerations. The full spectrum of drivers of food choice among the urban poor in informal settlements is poorly understood, particularly as they relate to preferences, knowledge of healthy eating, and intrahousehold resource allocation. Given the growing population living in low-income informal settlements in sub-Saharan Africa, effective policies and programs should include a strong focus on poor urban areas, which predominantly rely on informal markets. This research will provide nutrition and agriculture policymakers an in-depth, contextual understanding of dietary patterns and their influencers to support the development of nutrition-sensitive policies to sustainably promote ASF production and consumption.

## Methods

This mixed methods study took place among 300 low-income households in Dagoretti, an informal settlement in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Quantitative methods were used to assess personal and external food environments, ASF intake, dietary diversity, food security status, and food expenditures. Data was derived from a household questionnaire as well as market and retail surveys. Additionally, an economic game was developed and used to understand intrahousehold resource allocation. Qualitative focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were also conducted with households, key informants, and other stakeholders to add nuance to the quantitative components of the study.

## Results

Price and distance to food retailers were key drivers of ASF consumption. Demand for beef had a negative price

elasticity of demand ( $PED=-1.90$ ), meaning that when the price of the item changed, the demand changed inversely. Furthermore, beef prices were negatively correlated with women's haemoglobin levels, an indicator of iron status. Distance to beef retailer was associated with lower dietary diversity for women and poor nutrition for women and children. However, the perceived and objective qualities of beef available did not affect demand. Women's empowerment was a main predictor of dietary diversity and ASF consumption for women, as well as the nutritional and health status of women (e.g., haemoglobin levels) and children (e.g., stunting) Supplier characteristics (e.g., accessibility, business longevity and perceived quality of ASF sold) had no other effects on demand for ASFs for this study population. Larger incomes were associated with more diverse diets and higher consumption of ASFs at the household level, while larger household sizes were found to consume less ASFs.

## More Information

- “Drivers of demand for animal-source foods in low-income households in Nairobi: A qualitative perspective”  
By Bukachi S, Dominguez-Salas P, Lepine A, Kadiyala S, Ngutu M, Buisain JS, Wambui A. 5th Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy Week, June 30 – July 2, 2020.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d8zXHepx6s&feature=youtu.be>
- “A study of the demand drivers of animal source food consumption in Nairobi's lower income households.”  
By Lepine A, Dominguez-Salas P, Bukachi S, Kadiyala S, Ngutu M, Buisain JS, Wambui A. 5th Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy Week, June 30 – July 2, 2020.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGtcNAcx5Ww&feature=youtu.be>
- **Project Page** - <https://driversoffoodchoice.org/research/project-descriptions/animal-source-foods-nairobi/>

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