

Edible insects as a hidden ingredient? Consumer perceptions and expectations of front-of-package insect-labelling

Benedikt Jahnke

University of Kassel - Section Agricultural and Food Marketing

Berlianti Puteri

University of Kassel

Cite as:

Jahnke Benedikt, Puteri Berlianti (2025), Edible insects as a hidden ingredient? Consumer perceptions and expectations of front-of-package insect-labelling. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (125797)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



Edible insects as a hidden ingredient? Consumer perceptions and expectations of front-of-package insect-labelling

Abstract:

To increase acceptance of insect-based food, producers often apply a “hidden-is-best” principle, incorporating insects less visibly in processed products. While regulations ensure insect indication in the ingredient list, widespread disinformation indicates a gap between consumer expectations and labelling practices, showing the need for research into consumers’ perspectives. This study, involving six focus-group discussions in four German cities (N=50), explored consumer perceptions and expectations of front-of-package (FOP) insect-labelling. Findings revealed that many consumers fear “deception” and expect greater transparency through easily recognizable insect indications on FOP labelling. While the term “protein” on insect-labelling was well-received, we could not find a “one-size-fits-all-solution” for label formatting. The study offers recommendations for marketers, including the development of standardized FOP insect-labelling, designed in alignment with consumer preferences.

Keywords: alternative proteins; food labelling; perceived deception

Track: Product and Brand Management