

Process attributes of goods, ethical considerations and implications for animal products

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Abstract

Conventional wisdom holds that process is irrelevant to the demand function for a good if it cannot be observed in the final good's characteristics. Organizations promoting trade even promulgate regulations requiring that process information be thrown out as tariffs or barriers to trade. It is argued here that even if end products are physically identical, process is a relevant dimension of goods that can have a major impact on the demand function, particularly process elements related to the ethical dimensions of production.

Implications of process attributes of goods and their information implications are explored, particularly regarding animal products and the environment. It is concluded that institutional barriers currently provide consumers with insufficient process information. For markets to function optimally, additional information should be provided to consumers.