

**Research Poster from the  
Consumer and Market Demand Agricultural Policy Research Network  
Enabling Research for a Competitive Agriculture**



**ABSTRACT CMD-02**

**Changing egg demand in Canada: do advertising and health message contents matter?**

Getu Hailu<sup>1</sup>, and Ellen Goddard<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Guelph, Department of Food, Resource and Agricultural Economics, Canada

<sup>2</sup>University of Alberta, Department of Rural Economy, Canada

Egg demand has been and continues to be affected by health information and nutritional concerns. In the late 70's and early 80's, health concerns about cholesterol resulted in a steady decline in per capita shell egg consumption (Brown and Schrader 1990a; Ballesteros et al. 2004; Ballesteros et al. 2004). The egg industry responded through research on nutritional attributes of eggs and development of functional eggs (Omega-3 enhanced eggs, vitamin-enriched eggs, etc.). In both Canada and the U.S., total egg consumption has increased since the mid 1990's (ascribed, in part, to media attention related to the Atkins diet and to the development of functional eggs). In many ways eggs are now one of the most differentiated food products in the grocery store in terms of production/health attributes, and different forms in which to purchase eggs (processed, shell, organic, health enriched, free run or range).

Media coverage focused on the health and nutritional implications of egg consumption is pervasive (eg. Globe and Mail, November 8, 2010). There is significant, sometimes conflicting, coverage in the medical literature and news media of health implications (e.g., cardio-vascular disease, 'good' cholesterol) associated with egg consumption. At the same time primary producers (through generic advertising) and processing firms (through brand advertising) are significant players in the mainstream media. Processed egg products which can substitute for shell eggs are advertised as well. There are a myriad of media forces affecting the overall egg consumption throughout North America.

In this poster, tests for structural changes in Canadian consumer demand for eggs are conducted. These structural changes could have arisen in response to the popularization of the egg-cholesterol link and/or to the development of functional egg products. In addition the effects of the advertising of eggs, the development of processed shell egg substitute products, the cholesterol-egg link in popular media coverage and functional egg development are examined econometrically to identify impact on the demand for eggs, both shell and breaker. In particular in this research, whether there are interactive effects associated with the different types of information, content and sources, is examined.