

The Wegmans Experience with Irradiated Food

Wegmans



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3/27/2014

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“I have a small project for
you.....”

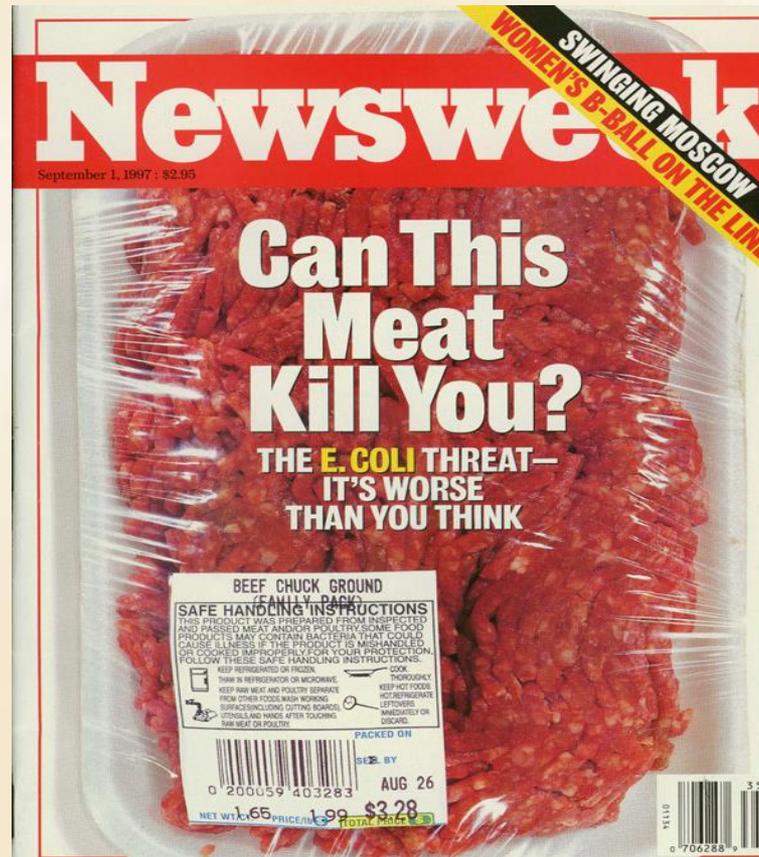


-Danny Wegman

Summer 1995

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1998 Cook to 160 Campaign



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THERE'S MORE TO COOKING BURGERS THAN MEETS THE EYE

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There's More to Cooking Burgers Than Meets the Eye!



Q: Which burgers are cooked to a safe temperature?



Not these, they're actually **undercooked** (below 160° F)

Believe it or not, **these are fully cooked!!**

Cooked hamburger photography courtesy of Kansas State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, Manhattan, Kansas

Cooking to 160°F is the ONLY way to tell if a burger is safe.

How can this be?

Recent research found that many naturally occurring things affect the color of beef, like the age of the animal it came from, whether or not seasonings have been ...

How to Take Your Burger's Temperature:



Withdraw T-Stick— if square is black, it's done.

With the meat on the grill, insert your instant-read meat thermometer or disposable T-Stick halfway into the thickest part. (Be sure it doesn't go through the other

COOK TO 160°F

Cooking ground beef to 160°F eliminates harmful bacteria which could cause serious or fatal illness.

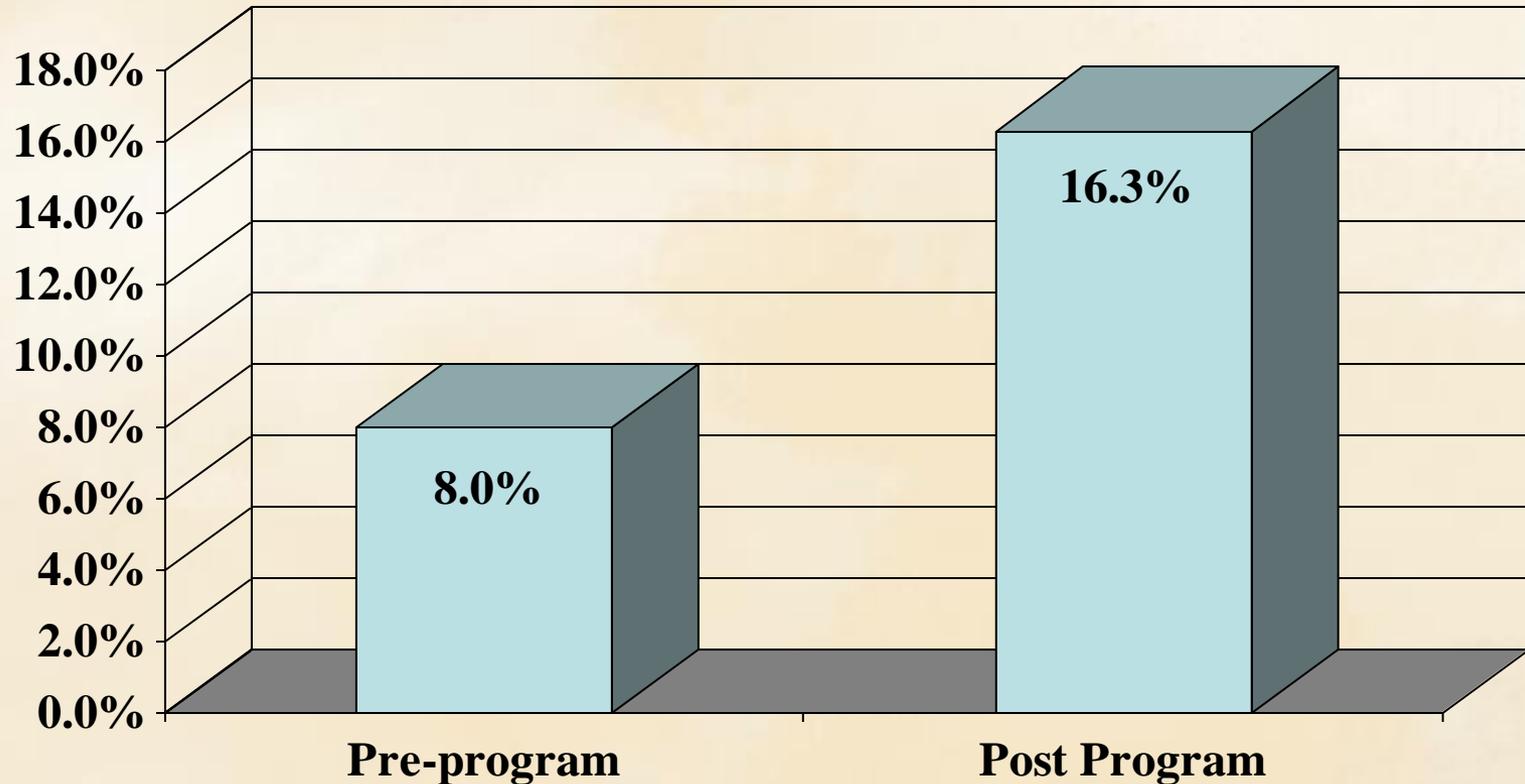


Put cooked beef on a clean plate.

Use a thermometer® or a T-Stick.®

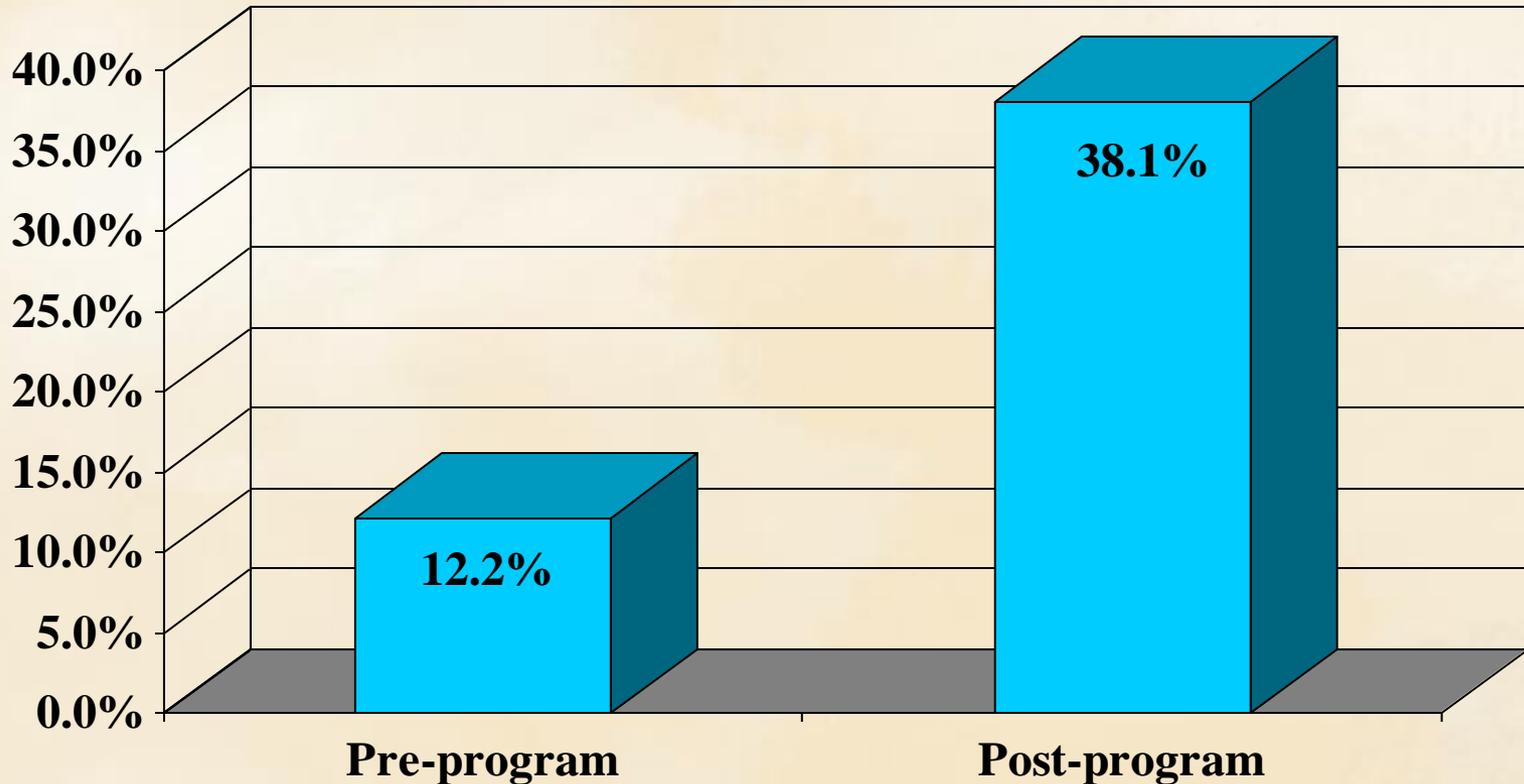
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CUSTOMERS JUDGING 'DONENESS' BY TEMPERATURE



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AWARENESS OF 160°



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2002

Irradiated Fresh Ground Beef Retail Introduction



Education

- **Employees**
- **Health Department**
- **Department of Agriculture**
- **University Contacts**

What is Food Irradiation?

- ***Food irradiation is a process in which food products are exposed to a controlled amount of radiant energy***
- ***Like pasteurization of milk, treating food with irradiation can kill bacteria that would otherwise cause foodborne disease.***

FDA Approval Process

- **Radiological Safety:** *Will radioactivity be induced in the food?*
- **Toxicological Safety:** *Is there evidence of adverse toxicological effects?*
- **Microbiological Safety:** *Will irradiation reduce spoilage organisms and allow pathogens to grow without competition?*
- **Nutritional Adequacy:** *Is there a significant loss of nutrients?*

History of Food Irradiation

- ***First paper published with the idea of irradiating food: 1895***
- ***First commercial use in Germany in 1957***
- ***1963: FDA approved the use of irradiation for wheat and wheat flour.***
- ***Early 1970s: NASA used irradiated food for astronauts.***

Who Supports Irradiation?

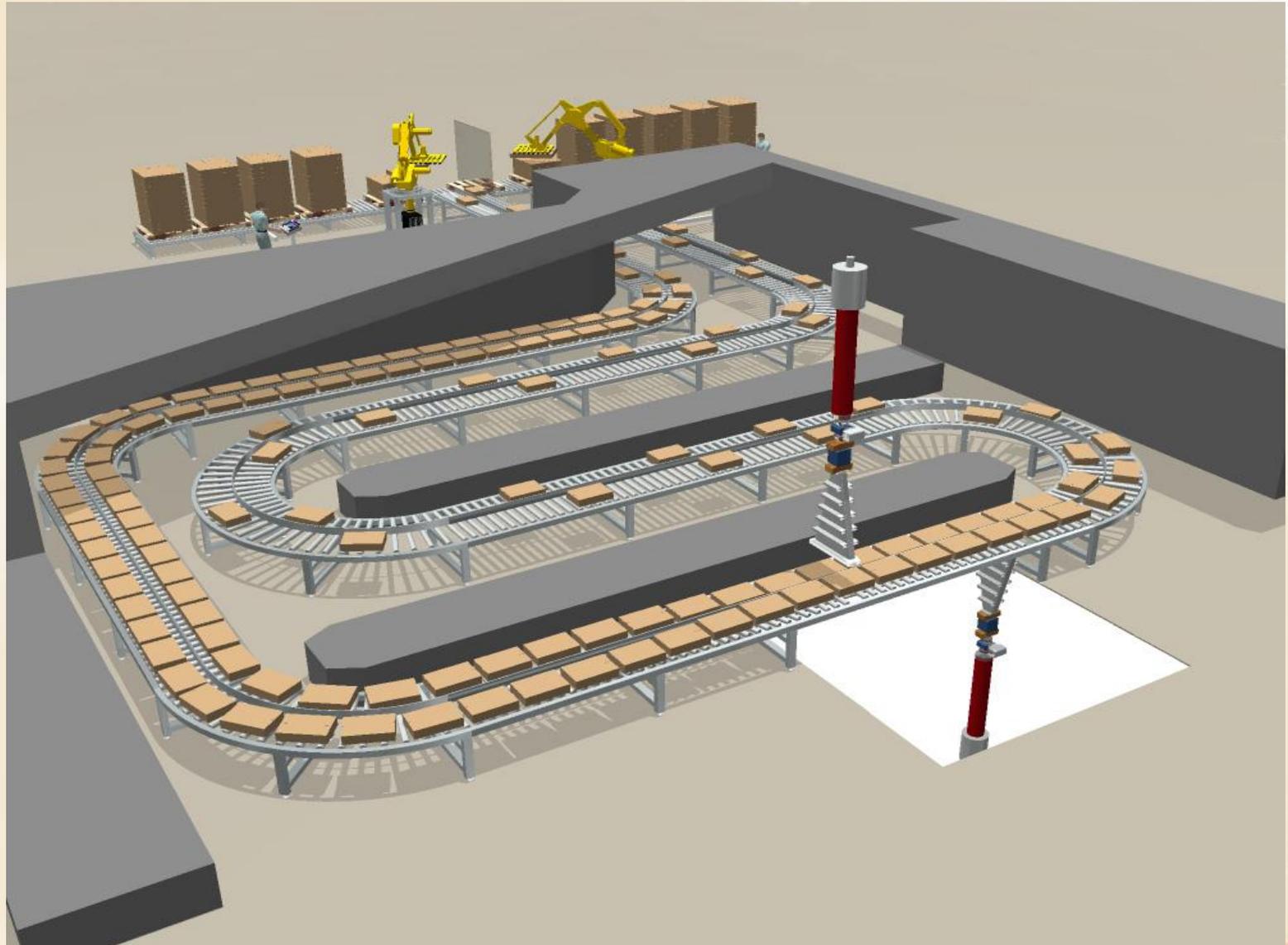
- **American Medical Association**
- **World Health Organization**
- **Centers For Disease Control**
- **Institute of Food Technologists**
- **Food and Drug Administration**
- **American Public Health Association**

Technology Choices

- 3 types of ionizing radiation have been approved for irradiating food - -***
- ***High-Energy Electrons (Electron Beam)***
 - ***Operated by electricity***
 - ***X-Ray***
 - ***Operated by electricity***
 - ***Gamma Rays***
 - ***Operated by radioactive isotopes (cobalt-60)***

Electron-beam

- **Electricity is power source-switch on and off.**
- **Uses stream of high-energy electrons accelerated at near the speed of light.**
- **Electrons are showered on the product.**
- **Facilities are shielded with concrete or steel walls.**
- **Penetrates approximately 2-3” of product and packaging.**



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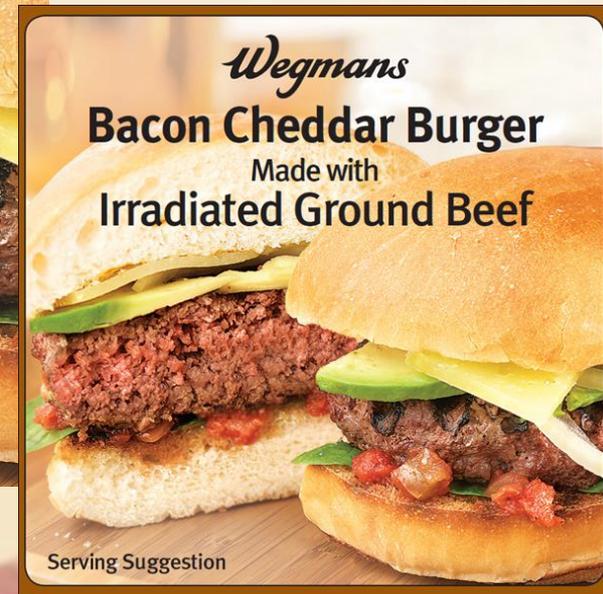
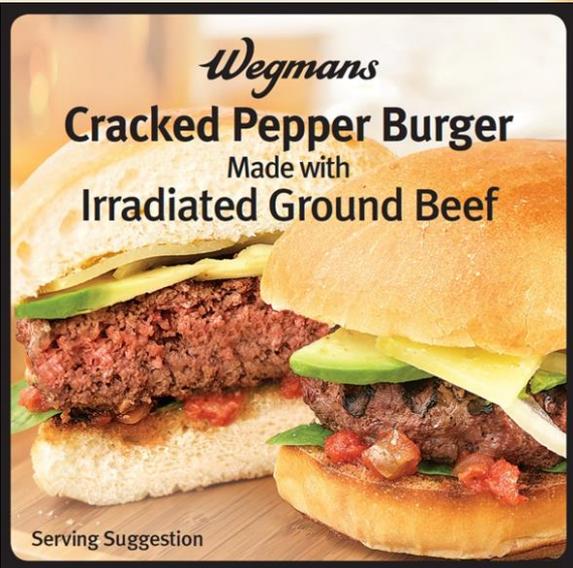
Regulatory Support

- **“We recognize that by offering irradiated ground beef, your stores will be taking an important step to provide consumers another choice among products that are safe and nutritious.”**

Joe Corby

NYS Agriculture & Markets

Employee Education



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In The Know - Irradiation

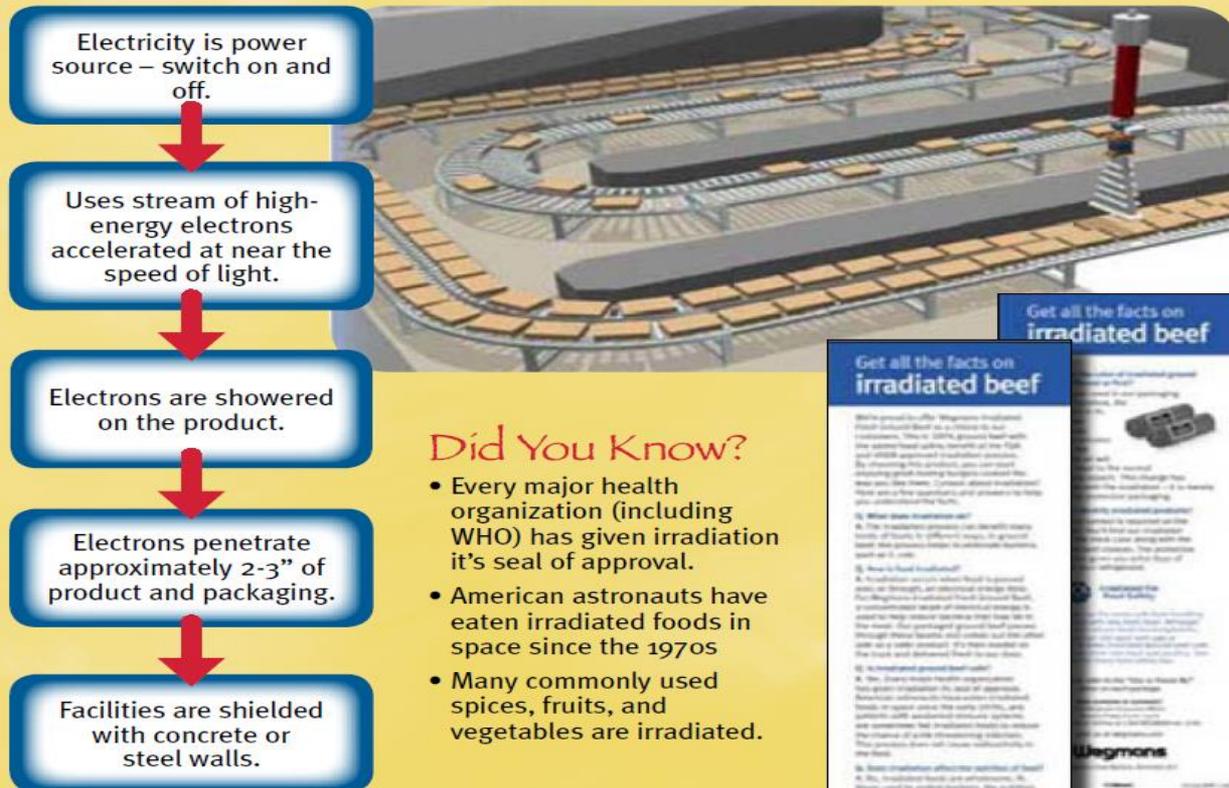
Why are we proud of our Irradiated Ground Beef?

It offers our customers a 100% ground beef line of products that have the added safety benefit of the FDA & USDA-approved irradiation process.

What is Electronic Beam Food Irradiation?

Electronic Beam Food Irradiation is a process in which food products are exposed to a controlled amount of electrical energy to help eliminate harmful bacteria such as E. coli.

The Electron Beam Irradiation Process



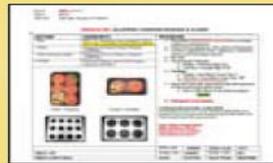
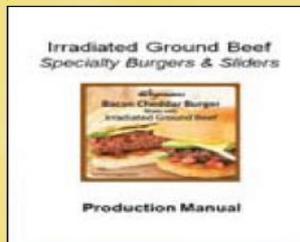
Specialty Burgers and Sliders Made with Irradiated ground beef

Preferred Practices

Step-by-Step:

- Review the process for producing all specialty burgers and sliders with irradiated ground beef with all team members.
- Educate customers on the safety benefits of “cook it the way you like it” to desired doneness.
- Due to USDA regulations & Food Safety guidelines block your irradiated burger section with dividers to keep out any contaminants.

Production Manual & Job Aid



Current Recipes

- 80% Plain
- Bacon and Cheddar
- Mushroom Swiss
- Vidalia Onion
- Cracked Pepper
- Blue Cheese
- Jalapeno Cheddar **NEW!**



**The order code for the 6.5lb ground beef chubs is 398502. Use this for producing Specialty Burgers and Sliders.*

Our **Best**
Recipe

+

Our **Best**
Ground Beef

=

Outstanding
Taste



What makes them unique:

- Irradiation means you can safely “**cook it the way you like it**” to desired doneness.
- Flavorful varieties like Bacon Cheddar, available as a burger or slider.
- Grill ready convenience.

Slidermania

Preferred Practices

Step-by-Step:

- Create a destination for all sliders and specialty burgers including beef, turkey, and salmon.
- Cross merchandise with Wegmans slider bun, condiments and grill accessories.
- Merchandise top 3 selling items (80% plain, bacon and cheddar, and mushroom swiss) at all times and layer additional flavors as needed.
- Support displays with overhead signs and shelf talkers (sign packages will be delivered w/e 5/7).

Overhead Sign



Slider Bun display



Don't forget to merchandise sliders with condiments, grill accessories and slider buns!

Display



Shelf Talkers





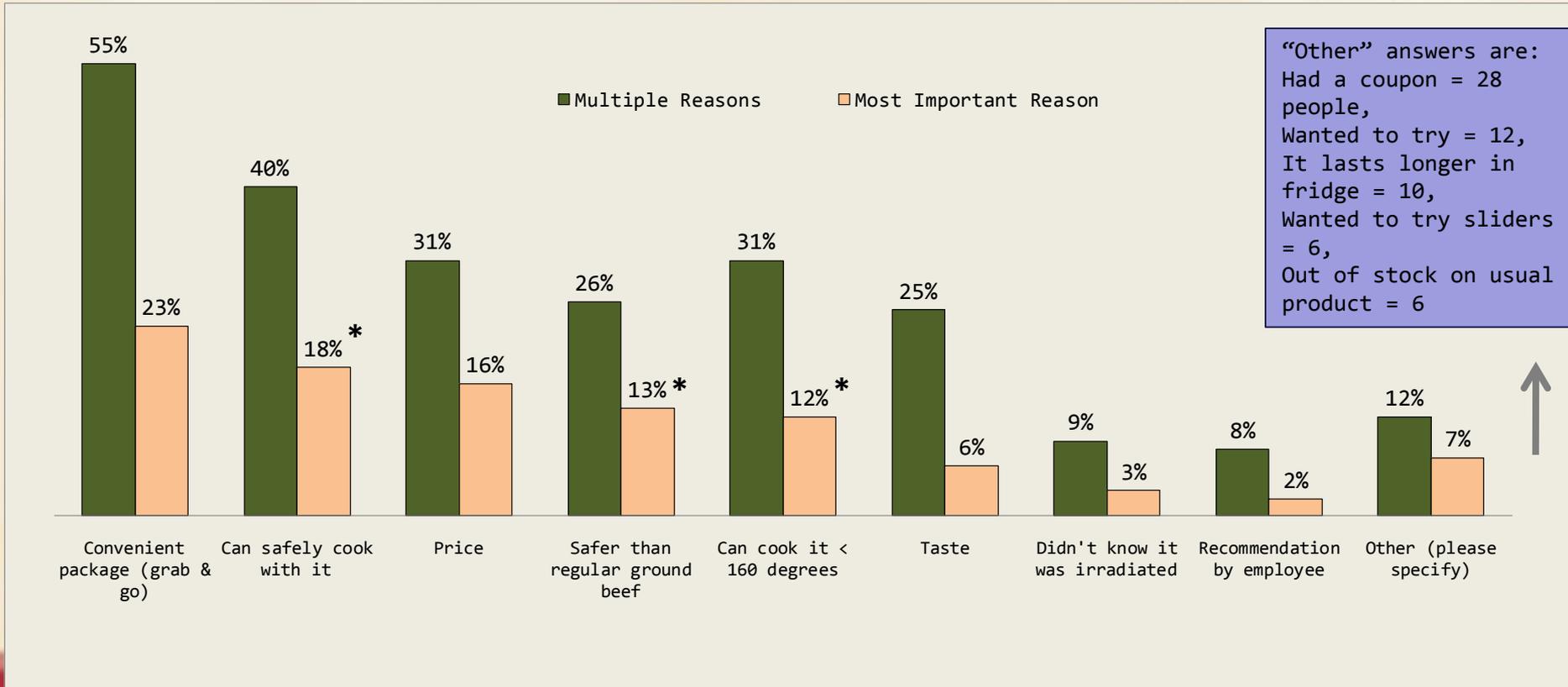
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Wegmans Food Markets Irradiated Beef Opinion Panel Survey

Purchase Reasons

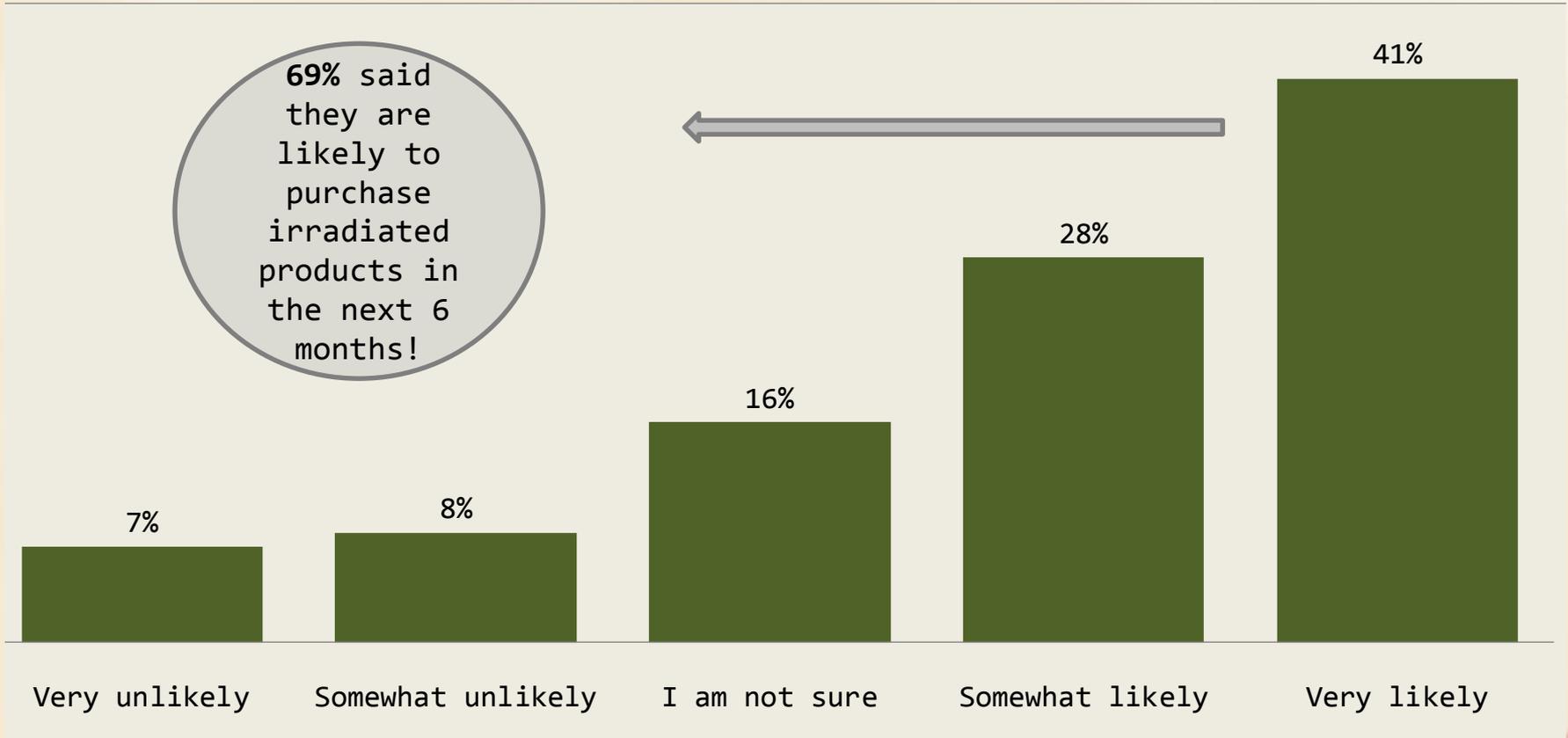
1st question “Please select all of the reasons why you purchased Wegmans irradiated ground beef. Select all that apply.” 2nd question “From the reasons selected above, what is the most important reason why you purchased Wegmans irradiated ground beef?”

The 3 “safety” responses (*) combined is 43% which surpasses convenience as the most important reason.



Repeat Purchases

“What is the likelihood that you will be buying irradiated ground beef products at Wegmans in the next 6 months?”



n=1,245

Unlikely to Repeat Purchase

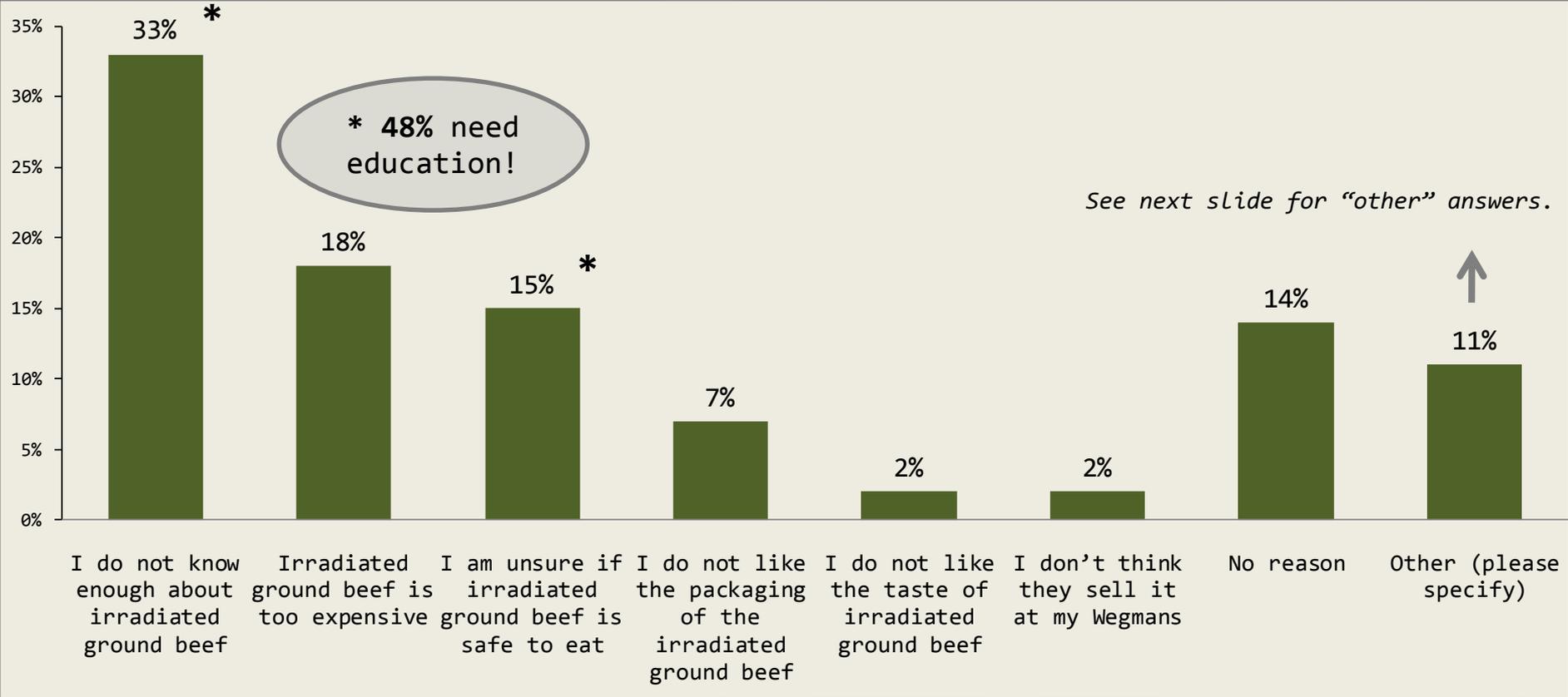
The respondents who responded “very unlikely” (7%) and somewhat unlikely (8%) to buy irradiated ground beef again were then asked to explain their answer through an open ended question.

"Why Not" Reasons	# of respondents
Irradiated is too expensive	31
I don't like the taste of irradiated	20
I prefer organic or grass fed beef	13
I like my ground beef well done so there is no need	9
I don't like the extra processing of the irradiated beef	8
I only like to buy club pack	6
Fat content is too high on irradiated products	6
The irradiated did not cook as nicely as regular	5
Irradiated has a bad texture when cooked	5
I had bought the sliders not knowing they were irradiated	4

Open ended question
n=186

Reasons for Not Buying Irradiated Ground Beef

We asked the 64% of total respondents who have NOT purchased irradiated ground beef products at Wegmans, why they have not. (They could select all the reasons that applied.)



n=2,361

Educational Paragraph

At the end of the survey, we asked all of the respondents to read this paragraph:

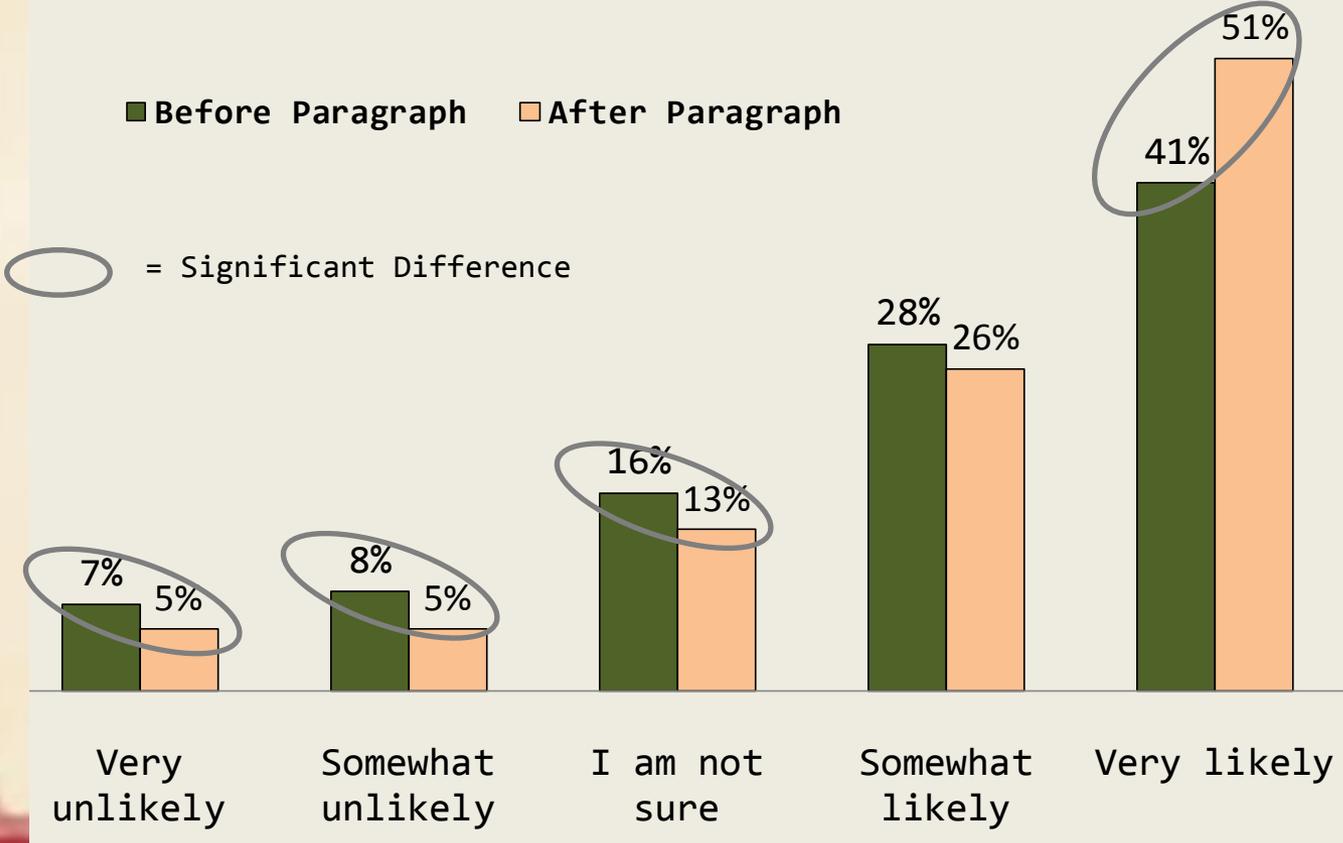
Irradiation occurs when food is passed over, or through, an electrical energy field. For Wegmans Irradiated Fresh Ground Beef, a concentrated beam of electrical energy is used to help reduce any bacteria, such as E. coli and Salmonella, that may be in the meat. Our packaged ground beef passes through these beams and in a few seconds comes out the other side as a safer product.).....In taste, quality, and nutrition, irradiated fresh ground beef is just like traditional fresh ground beef. Myths about irradiation are not true -- the meat is not radioactive, and no radioactive wastes are created by this (electron beam) process.

Then we asked “After reading the above paragraph, what is the likelihood that you would buy irradiated ground beef products from Wegmans in the next 6 months?”

- ❖ **36%** of respondents who have NOT purchased irradiated ground beef said that they would be likely to buy it
- ❖ **77%** of respondents who HAVE purchased irradiated ground beef said that they would be likely to buy it again

Likelihood of Purchasing After More Information

At the end of the survey, we showed all of the respondents who had purchased irradiated ground beef an informational paragraph that explained the irradiation process in great detail. We then asked the likelihood of purchase question again.

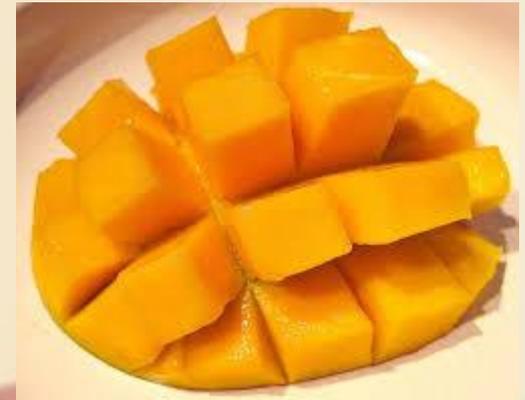


The educational paragraph had a significant difference on respondent's likelihood of purchasing irradiated ground beef in the future!

Conclusions

- ❖ **43%** of irradiated purchasers mentioned a food safety reason as the most important reason driving their irradiated ground beef purchases.
- ❖ **69%** of irradiated buyers said they are likely to repeat the purchase in the next 6 months. **15%** said they would not repeat the purchase and the main reason was “irradiated is too expensive.”
- ❖ The main reason why people said they did not buy irradiated ground beef at Wegmans is a lack of knowledge about the product (**48%**).
- ❖ After reading a detailed educational paragraph, the irradiated purchasers likelihood of a repeat purchase of irradiated ground beef jumped 8%, indicating that education will increase purchases.

Irradiated Fruit



Questions?

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