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*"De gustibus non disputandum."
(There is no accounting for tastes.)
-- Ancient Latin Proverb*

"The Great Dallas Chili Taste Off"

OBJECTIVE, METHOD AND DEMOGRAPHICS

To determine the relative consumer acceptance of two national brands of chili, attendees at the Institute of Food Technologists convention were served samples on a blind basis. After completing their evaluation of the first chili, they repeated the evaluation with the second sample (sequential monadic design). The average age of the 146 respondents was 35.5 years; they were 58% male and 42% female.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Taste this chili and indicate how well you like it overall:

	Score	Dennison's	Hormel
<i>Like extremely</i>	9	4%	1%
<i>Like very much</i>	8	15	8
<i>Like quite well</i>	7	19	13
<i>Like fairly well</i>	6	23	21
<i>Like moderately</i>	5	17	26
<i>Like slightly</i>	4	12	14
<i>Dislike slightly</i>	3	8	14
<i>Dislike very much</i>	2	1	3
<i>Dislike extremely</i>	1	1	0
AVERAGE SCORES:		5.9	5.3

Dennison's chili is liked significantly more by all demographic groups except females, who liked the two products about equally.

Now rate the chili for the balance between meat and beans:

	Score	Dennison's	Hormel
Much too much meat	+2	0%	1%
Slightly too much meat	+1	6	11
Just the right balance	0	37	33
Slightly too many beans	-1	41	49
Much too many beans	-2	16	6
AVERAGE SCORES:		-0.7	-0.5

The majority of respondents said they felt that both products had too many beans.

Now rate the chili for how hot or spicy it is:

	Score	Dennison's	Hormel
Much too hot/spicy	+2	0%	0%
Slightly too hot/spicy	+1	12	8
Just right	0	42	26
Not quite hot/spicy enough	-1	34	48
Not nearly hot/spicy enough	-2	11	18
AVERAGE SCORES:		-0.4	-0.8

Respondents tended to want more spice and heat in their chili.

Now rate the chili for thickness or consistency:

	Score	Dennison's	Hormel
Much too thick	+2	8%	1%
Slightly too thick	+1	23	11
Just right	0	62	53
Slightly too thin	-1	7	28
Much too thin	-2	1	6
AVERAGE SCORES:		+0.3	-0.3

Dennison's chili is about as much too thick as Hormel's is too thin.

Now that you have tasted both chilies, which did you prefer?

Preference	(n; confidence)	Dennison's	Hormel
All respondents	(145; x 95%)	68%	32%
males	(78; x 95%)	71	29
females	(61; x 95%)	66	34
easterners	(60; x 95%)	62	38
westerners	(34; x 95%)	85	15

The preference for Dennison's is significant for all demographic groups. Although females and easterners are more likely than other respondents to find the Hormel product acceptable, they also prefer Dennison's.

What was the single most important reason for your preference?

	Dennison's	Hormel
Flavor	53%	35%
Spices	24	19
Less spicy, milder	2	5
Balance of meat and beans	7	14
More meat	2	7
Less beans, firmer beans	0	4
Texture, consistency	4	9
Thicker	4	0
Less thick	0	7
Less salty	2	0

The Dennison's chili was generally preferred for flavor and spiciness and a thick texture. Those who preferred the Hormel product cited mildness, more meat, fewer beans of a better quality and a less thick product.

CONCLUSIONS

The strong overall preference for Dennison's chili with beans over the comparable Hormel product is primarily due to the flavor or spiciness of the Dennison's chili. In spite of its superior spiciness, respondents would like even more spice. Both products are excessively "beany" with Dennison's being poorest in this regard. The beans in the Hormel product, though excessive, are of a better texture. Also the Hormel product is "meatier." Neither product is near ideal in texture: Dennison's is too thick and Hormel's too thin.