A Dangerous Food Disconnect

When Consumers Hold You Responsible But Don't Trust You

THE CENTER FOR
FOOD INTEGRITY℠

FOODINTEGRITY.ORG

Critical Insights from The Center for Food Integrity

For a decade now The Center for Food Integrity has conducted annual research to understand **what's on the minds of today's consumers** when it comes to food – how it's produced, who's producing it, what's in it, how it impacts health, animals and our planet – and which sources they **trust**.

Examining more than **50 topics** among important influencer audiences and demographic characteristics, the latest results show a disturbing disconnect between the level of **responsibility** they assign to various groups for producing safe, healthy food and their level of **trust** in those groups.

Here's a snapshot of the findings and additional research results, which give us comprehensive insights into key concerns and who, how and where to engage to earn trust and close the gap.

The Gap: Responsibility & Trust

TRUST ALERT

THE GAP CONSEQUENCES

- Advocacy for more oversight and regulations
- Rejection of products or information
- Seeking alternate and perhaps unreliable sources

If you're held responsible and trusted for ensuring safe and healthy food, like farmers, **you're in a good place**. If you're held responsible but are **not** trusted to deliver, like federal regulatory agencies and food companies, **that's a problem**.

HELD RESPONSIBLE TO ENSURE SAFE FOOD

1. **Federal Regulatory Agencies**
2. **Food Companies**
3. **Farmers**
4. State Regulatory Agencies
5. Family
6. Grocery Stores
7. Family Doctor
8. Restaurants
9. Nutrition Advocacy Groups
10. University Scientists
11. Dietitians

TRUSTED TO ENSURE SAFE FOOD

1. Family
2. Family Doctor
3. **Farmers**
4. Dietitians
5. Nutrition Advocacy Groups
6. University Scientists
7. Grocery Stores
8. **Federal Regulatory Agencies**
9. State Regulatory Agencies
10. Restaurants
11. **Food Companies**

* *Results are similar for ensuring healthy food*

There is increasing food system interest in extending the farmer halo to food brands and products. CFI's research provides insight into consumer distinctions between farmers and farming, and effective approaches to leverage consumer trust in farmers.

CFI provides **support** and **insight** to companies and organizations interested in building trust. Transparency is a **powerful** trust-building tool. It begins by achieving internal alignment, requires authentic consumer engagement, and **must** be woven into the organization's core philosophy to be successful.

The Diet & Health Connection

Of 18 life issues presented, 4 of the 6 most concerning are related to food.

For the **fourth** year **"Keeping Healthy Food Affordable"** is a top concern, pointing to the increased emphasis on the relationship between diet and health.

75%	Rising Healthcare Costs
65%	Keeping Healthy Food Affordable
63%	Affordability of Food
61%	U.S. Economy
59%	Food Safety
59%	Safety of Imported Food

The Foodie Factor

Foodies, important influencers who actively research and share information, express higher concern for all life issues and are more engaged with food-related issues overall.

* The percentage represents those who rated the issue between 8-10 on a 1-10 scale, where 0-3 is low agreement, 4-7 is moderate and 8-10 is high.

Under Pressure

While **"mom guilt" is real** when it comes to providing healthy food to their kids,

moms are less likely to feel pressure to eat healthier themselves.

Younger consumers (18-27) are **more likely** to feel pressure to eat healthier in all situations – with family, friends, work colleagues and strangers.

Engage consumers on the healthfulness, affordability and safety of food.

Trusted Sources & Hot Topics

Of the sources ranked #1 for food-related issues, **search engines** like Google and Bing top the list. However, sources are diverse depending on the user.

SOURCES RANKED #1 FOR FOOD-RELATED ISSUES

17%	13%	13%	15%
Google bing			
SEARCH ENGINES	WEBSITES	FAMILY-NOT ONLINE	LOCAL TV

Know Your Audience

Moms and Millennials prefer search engines.

- Boost content and incorporate key words to improve rankings

Ages 55-65 prefer local TV.

- Pitch stories and media tours

Varies by topic: CFI research provides a roadmap for outreach to important segments

Top 3 Most Searched Food Topics

1. Ingredients in Food
2. Impact of Food on Health
3. Food Safety

FOOD-RELATED ISSUES

Most Trusted	Least Trusted
#1 **Family Doctor**	#14 Food Companies & Manufacturers
#2 Family	#15 Dr. Oz
#3 Farmer	#16 **Food Babe**

Celebrity does **NOT** equal credibility.

59% believe they have all the information they need related to food to make good decisions for themselves and their family.

But is it credible information?

39% strongly agree online information shapes their opinions and that's higher for some consumer segments.

You can't afford not to be there.

Reaching the right audiences requires a multi-channel approach.

Attitudes on U.S. Ag & Food

Consumers have a more **favorable** opinion of agriculture than of food manufacturing, but want to know more about both.

Agriculture

Nearly
2 out of 3
hold positive impression

VERY POSITIVE 14%
SOMEWHAT POSITIVE 50%

65% are interested in knowing more

Higher among Foodies, Early Adopters, Women, Younger Consumers

Food Manufacturing

Just
under half
hold a positive impression

VERY POSITIVE 8%
SOMEWHAT POSITIVE 36%

63% are interested in knowing more

Higher among Foodies, Early Adopters, Younger Consumers

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY Most consumers are **hungry** for information and a better understanding of the food system. How are **you** responding? CFI provides guidance to enhance engagement, balance the conversation and **earn trust**.

Topics & Trends

Here's a sample of the more than **30 statements** posed to respondents. Attitudes vary significantly by consumer segment on many topics. Overall, trust is down from previous years, which may reflect a broader societal sentiment.

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT

0-3	4-7	8-10
Low	Moderate	Strong

"I am confident in the safety of the food I eat."

Only 33% strongly agree, compared to 47% the previous year.

8% | 59% | 33%

Only 1 in 2 trust food produced in the U.S. more than food produced outside the U.S.

You may be proud of how your farm or food company has grown, but touting the expansive size or global nature of it can raise a red flag for consumers who may then question whether you're worthy of their trust.

Big is Bad

Only **1 in 4** believe **small** food companies will put their interests ahead of public interest.

Just over half believe large food companies will.

Results are **similar** for small vs. large farms.

"If farm animals are treated decently and humanely, I have no problem consuming meat milk and eggs."

5% | 34% | 61%

Only 25% believe U.S. meat is derived from humanely treated animals.

TRUST ALERT

Enhance communication regarding animal well-being on the farm. Posting videos and/or pictures online, along with stories from the farm, increases transparency and helps build trust.

"U.S. farmers take good care of the environment."

Only **30% strongly agree**, compared to 42% the previous year.

80% moderately or strongly agree that they are more concerned about global warming and climate change than they were a year ago.

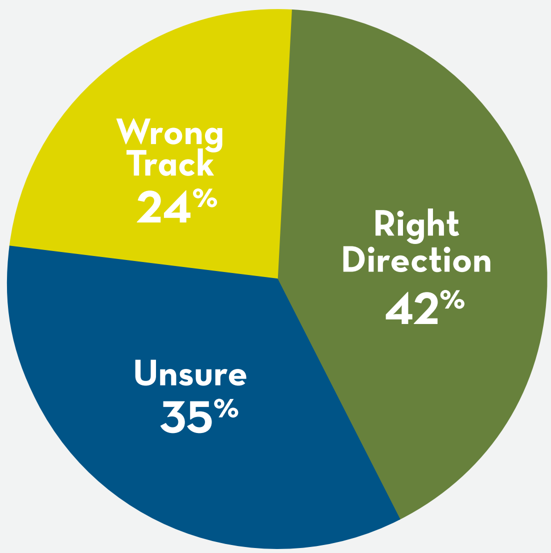
TRUST ALERT

"I trust today's food system."

Only 25% strongly agree, a drop from 37% in the previous year.

Right Direction or Wrong Track?

Just under half believe the food system is headed in the **right** direction.



The trust gap is real. Connect with us to learn more about our decade of comprehensive consumer trust research and how you can apply it to close the gap.

For more insights into our research and how to put it to work, contact CFI at **learnmore@foodintegrity.org**

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Thank you to the sponsors who fund CFI's annual consumer trust research through the Foundation for Food Integrity, a non-profit foundation created to conduct research and provide educational outreach about today's food system.

CFI Members

CFI members contribute to the study through allocation of dues

National Sponsors

American Farm Bureau Federation

Dairy Management Inc.

National Pork Board

United Soybean Board

State Sponsors

Iowa Farm Bureau

Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin

THE CENTER FOR
FOOD INTEGRITY℠

2900 NE BROOKTREE LANE, STE 200
GLADSTONE, MO 64119

816-880-5360

FOODINTEGRITY.ORG

learnmore@foodintegrity.org