



FSPC Survey Results (Highlights)

Methodology

These results are based on telephone interviews with randomly selected participants of 1,014 adults, aged 18 and older between October 31, 2005 and February 9, 2006. The survey was conducted on behalf of the Food Safety Policy Center by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at Michigan State University. For results based on these samples, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is ± 3 percentage points. Results are weighted to reflect the socio-demographic composition of the United States population.

1. Public concern with food safety

- 63% of respondents are very or fairly concerned about the safety of the foods they eat (33% very concerned), 34% not concerned.
- 68% are very or fairly concerned about foodborne illnesses (35% very concerned), only 22% not concerned.
- 50% are very or fairly concerned about antibiotics and hormones (28% very concerned), 41% not concerned.
- 70% are very or fairly concerned about pesticide and chemical residues (39% very concerned), only 22% not concerned
- 52% are very or fairly concerned about additives and preservatives (24% very concerned), 38% not concerned
- The public is most concerned about pesticide and chemical residues and foodborne illnesses. About half of the respondents were concerned with antibiotics/hormones and additives/preservatives.
- Even though 34% of respondents said they were not concerned about the safety of the foods they eat, only about one-fifth are not concerned about pesticide/chemical residues and foodborne illnesses.

2. Consumer behaviors and food safety

- 54% of respondents said they think about food safety when shopping at the grocery store
- 46% thought about food safety the last time they ate at a restaurant
- 43% said they do not buy foods because they are likely to be unsafe
- 58% said that they know a lot or quite a bit about food safety, about a third indicated they knew a little, and only 8% said they knew not much at all

3. Perceptions of food system actors

- Respondents believe that the federal government should be most responsible for insuring food safety (38%), followed by food processors and manufacturers (23%), consumers (11%), state government (10%), farmers (7%), grocery stores (4%), and restaurants (2%).



- 78% said that federal government agencies (FDA and USDA) were doing a good job of making sure that the foods they eat are safe; 78% for food processors and manufacturers; 89% for farmers; 82% for grocery stores; 69% for restaurants; 62% for average Americans; 96% for respondents
- 88% of respondents stated that the FDA and USDA were capable in making sure the foods we eat are safe; 91% for food processors and manufacturers; 92% for farmers; 93% for grocery stores; 95% for restaurants; 85% for average Americans; and 98% for respondents
- 78% indicated that the FDA and USDA were committed to food safety; 86% for food processors and manufacturers; 93% for farmers; 90% for grocery stores; 82% for restaurants; 80% for average Americans, and 97% for respondents
- Only 51% believe that federal government agencies have enough resources to insure food safety; 75% for food processors and manufacturers; 62% for farmers; 68% for restaurants; 56% for average Americans; and 66% for respondents

4. Trade-offs between food safety and other food attributes

- More respondents agreed that the government should ban foods that are less safe even if they have other attributes such as nutrition, taste, and convenience than disagreed (47% to 42%; 55% to 38%; 64% to 30%).
- The majority of respondents feel that anyone should be able to buy any foods regardless of how safe or unsafe they may be (52%)

5. Acceptability and willingness to pay to increase food safety

- The majority of respondents stated that the current number of foodborne related illnesses and deaths are unacceptable. 73% said that the percentage of foodborne illnesses is unacceptable; 60% said that the number of hospitalizations due to foodborne diseases is unacceptable; and 68% stated that the number of deaths due to foodborne diseases is unacceptable.
- About three quarters of respondents (74%) would be willing to pay an additional five percent to their food bill if foodborne diseases could be reduced by 50%; 84 percent would be willing to pay an additional \$270 to their food bill if foodborne diseases could be reduced by 50% [\$270 is the equivalent to paying five percent more).

6. Policy options

- 96% of respondents state that labels should contain food safety information (52% strongly agree)
- 95% of respondents indicate that imported foods should be subjected to the same inspection processes as domestically produced foods (56% strongly agree)
- 71% disagree that imported foods are as safe as domestic foods