



Food Safety Worries Strongest Outside The West

Older women have least faith, Ipsos Global Express survey shows

New York, NY, September 15, 2004 — Americans and Western Europeans are less anxious about their local food supply safety than they were a decade ago. Who's more worried?

Almost two-thirds of consumers in Mexico and urban Russia think they have a less safe food supply, according to Ipsos, the global marketing research firm. Negative opinions about the food supply are also strong in the Asian countries surveyed. Between 50% - 60% of consumers in urban China (including Hong Kong), Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan think food safety is more compromised now than it was 10 years ago.

In five of our eleven countries surveyed, majorities of consumers consider the food they can buy locally to be at least as safe as it was ten years ago. These countries are: the U.S., the U.K., Germany, Italy, and Spain.

In one of these five countries, Italy, fully half think the food in their marketplace has become safer over the past 10 years. Spaniards are nearly as confident, with 44% believing safety has improved over the past decade.

But outside the West, assessments of the safety of the local food supply turn drastically negative. For example, the Japanese — who are likely exposed to far more news reports about avian flu than Western Europeans — are 13 points more likely to say that food safety has declined over the past decade.

The last time Ipsos asked consumers about food safety, the media was full of reports about outbreaks of mad cow disease and, to a lesser extent, foot-and-mouth disease. These afflictions, which can devastate cattle stocks and sometimes cause lethal human variants, were mostly concentrated in Europe. Since then, these outbreaks have become both less frequent and more manageable, thanks in large part to prevention. But another animal-hosted disease—avian flu—has wreaked havoc, mostly in Asia and Canada.

Among other survey highlights:

- In Asia, confidence in the safety of the food supply declines among women, middle-aged and older respondents, and higher income consumers. In Asia, women aged 55 and older have the least amount of faith in their food supply (63% opted for "less safe"), while young Asian men aged 18 to 34 are the most secure that the food supply is at least as safe as 10 years ago (55% "as safe" or "more safe").
- In Western Europe, women are less trusting of the local food supply than are men; women over the age of 35 are especially wary. In general, with advancing age comes declining confidence in food safety.



International Consumers' Perceptions of Food Safety Today vs. Ten Years Ago

"Thinking about the overall safety of the food available to consumers in your area, all things considered, would you say the food today is more safe, less safe, or about as safe as it was ten years ago?"

(Percentages)	Safer	Less Safe	As Safe	Don't Know
Americas				
U.S.	28	24	47	0
Mexico*	24	62	12	2
Europe				
Germany	32	39	27	2
Italy	50	35	15	0
Spain	44	35	19	3
U.K.	32	33	30	5
Russia*	8	64	14	13
Asia				
China**	30	56	12	2
Japan	19	52	30	0
South Korea	22	58	18	2
Taiwan	25	50	19	5

* Urban-only sample.

** China's urban-only sample includes Hong Kong.

The Methodology

The data presented in this alert come from the most recent Ipsos Global Express conducted in China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States between the dates of May 13 and June 15, 2004. Samples in eight countries were national, while those in China, Mexico and Russia were urban-only. Telephone interviewing was used for the national samples, and in-person interviewing was used for the urban samples.

Global Express typically involves sample sizes of 500 in each national market; 1,000 in the United States. This quarter, the four Western European countries—Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom—had a sample size of 250 each. These reduced sample sizes provide for a margin of error of ± 6 percentage points. For the other countries with the samples of 500, the margin of error can be said to be within ± 4 percentage points, and for the United States sample of 1,000, it would be ± 3 percentage points.

For further information on the survey methodology used for the Ipsos Global Express polling program, please contact Rob Breikreuz, Global Express Director at Rob.Breikreuz@ipsos-na.com.

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