

Concern for Food Safety in Canada on the Rise, With Eight in Ten (77%) Canadians ‘Concerned’ About the Safety of the Food They Eat (+11 Points)

*Most (85%) Say They Make an Effort to Buy Locally-Grown
and Produced Food*

*Nine in Ten (87%) Say They Trust Food That Comes from Canada More
Than Food Imported From Abroad*

Public Release Date: Thursday, August 12, 2010, 6:00am EST



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Toronto, ON – As the saying goes, you are what you eat, and so it seems logical that one must trust that the food they consume is safe. However, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News has revealed that eight in ten (77%) Canadians are ‘concerned’ (34% very/44% somewhat) with the safety of the food that they eat’ – an increase of 11 points in three years. Conversely, just one quarter (23%) of Canadian say they’re ‘not concerned’ (3% not at all/19% not really) with the safety of the food they eat, a decrease of 11 points.

It appears that this relatively high level of concern could help to inform Canadians’ eating habits, as most (91%) ‘agree’ that, in general, they ‘trust in the safety of the food that they eat’. However, one can’t be completely certain in many cases, which perhaps helps to explain why just two in ten (20%) ‘strongly agree’ with this sentiment.

The ability to trust in the safety in one’s food is likely paramount to one’s purchasing decision, but the poll reveals that many Canadians don’t completely trust in the safety of all sorts of food that they eat. While a majority (54%) completely trusts in the safety of the grains

and bread that they eat, fewer completely trust dairy (40%), vegetables (38%), and fruit (33%). Just two in ten (19%) completely trust meat, in general.

So what is it that Canadians are doing in an effort to try to eat foods that they consider to be more trustworthy? Most (85%) 'agree' (32% strongly/53% somewhat) that they 'make an effort to buy locally-grown and produced food', perhaps because most (87%) 'agree' that they 'trust food that comes from Canada more than food that comes from abroad'.

In fact, a majority (68%) believes that Canadian food is safer than imported food (5% think it's less safe and 28% say there's no difference), and a similar proportion (64%) is of the opinion that Canadian food is of better quality than imported food (4% say Canadian food is of lesser quality and 31% think there's no difference). When it comes to nutrition, nearly one half (45%) thinks that Canadian food is more nutritious, compared to a majority (52%) who thinks imported food is just as nutritious as Canadian food. Just 4% think that Canadian food is less nutritious than imported food, in general.

However, when it comes to price, four in ten (37%) Canadians believe that Canadian food is more expensive than food that is imported, compared to just one quarter (25%) who believes Canadian food generally costs less. Four in ten (38%) think there's no difference. Even though many think eating Canadian food is more expensive than imported food, most (69%) are not bothered by that, 'agreeing' (21% strongly/48% somewhat) that they are 'willing to pay more for food if it is locally-grown or produced'. Just one in three (31%) 'disagree' (6% strongly/25% somewhat) that they'd pay more for locally-grown food'.

But there's another factor when it comes to choosing between locally-grown food and imports – the environment. A majority (59%) of Canadians 'agree' (16% strongly/42% somewhat) that 'importing food from all over the world is bad for the environment', while four in ten (41%)



'disagree' (7% strongly/34% somewhat) that it is. So while some likely feel that they are doing their part to help the environment – and to support local producers – by opting to eat locally-produced food, many Canadians would be willing to give up some popular imported products in order to reduce shipping and lessen its impact on the environment: two in three (67%) would be willing to give up imported beer (including 62% of men), while a majority (56%) of Canadians would be willing to give up imported wine. Fewer would be willing to give up tea (36%), imported fruit (32%), coffee (32%), or rice (25%) in order to reduce shipping and help the environment. One in ten (12%) Canadians say they wouldn't give up any of these items.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between July 23 to 30, 2010, on behalf of Postmedia News. For this survey, a sample of 1,014 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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