

Public Trust Among Millennials – Passing Fad or Force to Watch? Canadian Poultry Magazine

By Ashley Bruner
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Sometimes trends are not worth the hype. I'm sure we all have at least one picture lying around with an outfit we thought was 'classic' but is now horribly outdated. In today's age of ever-evolving food trends from cronuts to charcoal ice cream it can be hard to know what trends are fleeting and which ones will stand the test of time.

At the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) we have been studying one of today's most trendy segments in research – millennials.

Millennials are more than a catchy term for 18-34-year old's, they are a group with growing influence on the Canadian food system. According to Statistics Canada, millennials now represent the largest generation in the workforce and will continue to increase as older generations retire. This means that millennials will increasingly be the decision makers and hold key positions throughout the agri-food chain.

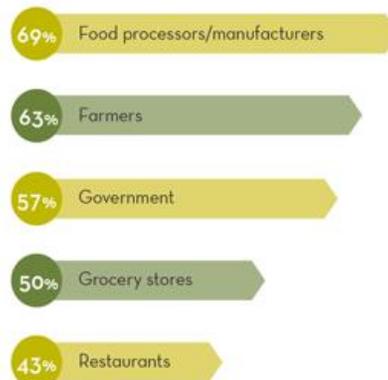
Not only will millennials be the dominate demographic in the workforce, but the marketplace as well. Millennials will be the largest demographic buying weekly groceries, going to restaurants, and making food-related decisions for their growing families over the next 30 years, so what they think about the food system matters.

CCFI's 2017 Public Trust research revealed that food issues are front of mind among millennials - the rising cost of food and keeping healthy food affordable are the top two life issues followed by their financial situation, climate change, and rising energy costs.

Despite citing food issues among their top concerns, millennials are not actively engaging on key food system topics like food safety, humane treatment of animals, and innovative approaches to growing food. In fact, over four in ten say they only think about these topics if they are in the media or they're forced to.

Who do millennials think should be providing information on the food they eat since they themselves are not actively seeking it out? Our research shows that nearly two-thirds feel Canada's farmers should be providing this type of information, so it's time for our farmers to answer this call to action.

Responsibility for Providing Information On How Food is Grown (Rated 8-10 out of 10)



Source: CCFI Public Trust Research 2017

Young farmers are well positioned to speak to their peers on this issue, and our research provides some insights on how best to talk to them starting with where to have these conversations in the first place. **The best place to engage with millennials is online** – the top source of information on food system issues for this group.

A perceived lack of transparency and information is commonly cited by millennials with moderate to low trust ratings (rating of 4-7 out of 10) for Canadian farmers, the way they grow our food, and the information they provide. To address this concern, **outreach must be loud, clear, and credible.**

Two areas millennials feel farmers are most responsible for providing transparent information on is the impact of food production on the environment and the treatment of animals raised for food followed by food safety and business ethics in food production. **When engaging with millennials, farmers should address these issues directly.** This needs to be authentic – which includes admitting areas where improvement is needed, or problems exist.

The importance of building millennials' trust in our food system will outlast any trendy diet or food craze in the long term.

Millennials care about food issues but are not proactively engaged with them. This means you must get their attention first, then turn up the volume for sharing clear and credible information on food. Young farmers can lead the charge connecting with their peers through their social media channels and putting themselves outside their normal circle of others in the industry.

Interested in learning more?

Download the CCFI Public Trust Research reports or listen to a webinar about Millennials and Trust in the Food System on www.foodintegrity.ca. Join us at the CCFI Public Trust Summit in Gatineau on November 13-14th as we take these research Insights to Actions.

About Ashley...

Ashley has recently joined CCFI as a Research Coordinator and is excited to bring her market research and public policy experience to the team. For the past six years Ashley has worked at Ipsos Public Affairs, managing hundreds of research projects with diverse methodologies for variety of clients in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. She is now happily leveraging CCFI research findings into actionable insights to help Canada's food system earn trust.