

Prince Edward Island Residents Lead in Confidence of Canada's Food System

Despite a global pandemic, Islanders are trusting and optimistic about their food

GUELPH, ON – November 18, 2020 – According to new research from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI), Prince Edward Island residents are the most optimistic in Canada about their food supply, even as Canada's food system faces exceptional pressure and public scrutiny due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020.

The recently unveiled 5th edition of the 2020 Public Trust Research Report, *Trends in Trust & The Path Forward* indicates that of the proportion of Islanders (66%) who feel that Canada's food system is headed in the right direction has reached a five-year high and leads all Canadian provinces.

Those in PEI also lead Canada by indicating the highest levels of trust for farmers, agriculture, and the food system. PEI residents have the highest agreement with the statement that Canadian farmers are good stewards of the environment.

Prince Edward Island results are included in a national survey of Canadians conducted annually by CCFI. During the first two weeks of August, CCFI engaged polling firm Ipsos to survey 2903 Canadians, 18 and over, in a wide-ranging questionnaire designed to track public attitudes about Canadian food, agriculture, and food system issues. 300 PEI residents were part of the study - the results of the survey are accurate within +/- 2.1 percentage points.

The Canadian food system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been highly praised by PEI consumers; nearly nine in ten (88%) trust that the food system will ensure the availability of healthy food for Canadians.

"PEI's food system stakeholders should be proud of their efforts throughout the pandemic, that has ensured Islanders and Canadians uninterrupted access to healthy, Canadian-grown food," comments John Jamieson, President and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity. "The fact that Islanders recognize these efforts and are trusting and confident in their food system presents our industry with an extraordinary opportunity to connect with consumers and highlight the potential for the food system to lead economic recovery in PEI and Canada."

Affordability is Top of Mind

As the pandemic continues to take its toll on the economy and unemployment rates, Canadians are most concerned about the cost of food, and PEI residents share this concern. The current circumstances have highlighted this struggle, with 63% of PEI residents concerned about keeping healthy food available to them and their family; 49% also indicated they have less money to spend on food, as a direct result of the pandemic.

Sustainability – More Than Just a Buzzword

The 2020 research also concluded that the topic of sustainability in food is not just a trend but a requirement to be a trusted and successful food system player. Sustainable food means many things to many people, but for almost half of Islanders (48%), it refers to food options that are raised and grown locally. In terms of the environment, Island residents are worried about the use of pesticides in crop production with 56% indicating concern - this level of concern is the highest in Canada.

CCFI encourages those interested in downloading the 2020 Public Trust Research Report, to visit www.foodintegrity.ca, or click on the following link: <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/research/>.

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The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity is a national charity with a clearly defined mandate to help Canada's food system earn public trust by coordinating research, resources, dialogue, and communications.

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