



Centre canadien
pour l'intégrité
alimentaire



Canadian
Centre for
Food Integrity

2024 Public Trust Research

The Highlight Report





Our Story and Our Mission

Canadians have questions about food – where it comes from, who's producing it, and how. Their healthy curiosity is why we exist. These questions form the foundation of public trust in the food system.

It's not about supporting a certain outcome. *We don't lobby or take sides; instead, we provide balanced information to help Canadians make informed decisions.*

We want to make sure that Canadians – who are bombarded everyday with contradictions about food – have the balanced information they need to help them make informed choices for themselves and their loved ones.



What is the "food system"?

A food system is the path that food travels from field to table. It includes the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each step.

Centre canadien
pour l'intégrité
alimentaire



Canadian
Centre for
Food Integrity

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity is a national not-for-profit charity with a mission to build public trust in Canada's food system.

We believe in a food system that is transparent, trustworthy, safe, and sustainable. Through communications, independent research and valuable resources, we foster meaningful dialogue on food issues that matter.

The conversation is happening - make sure your voice is heard.

CCFI uniquely brings together the entirety of Canada's food system to support a coordinated approach in building public trust.

Our members and partners represent the diversity of today's food system – from farmers, ranchers, associations, government(s), food companies, universities, non-governmental organizations, restaurants, retailers, food processors, financial institutions, seed companies, and transportation providers. Energy providers, environmental organizations, healthcare and nutrition bodies, water management specialists, and more – we collaborate with them too.

Help shape the future of food today

Join Now!

www.foodintegrity.ca





Report Contents

CCFI PUBLIC TRUST RESEARCH	5.
Learn about our annual study and its crucial role in advancing knowledge and fostering trust.	
LIFE AND FOOD IN FOCUS	8.
Tracking public sentiment on everyday life issues alongside key food and farm topics, revealing how they intersect and influence each other.	
KEY TRUST INDICATORS	15.
A deep dive into key trust metrics shaping public opinion about Canada's agrifood system and its stakeholders.	
SECTOR SHOWDOWN: AGRIFOOD'S PLACE IN THE TRUST RACE	20.
Comparing Canadian agriculture's performance against other key industries to highlight its standing in the national landscape.	
THE HEART OF CANADA: AGRIFOOD AND OUR SHARED VALUES	23.
Uncover the key messages that resonate with Canadians and explore opportunities to enhance trust in the agrifood sector.	
TOP 20 FOOD FOR THOUGHT INSIGHTS FROM THE 2024 RESEARCH	27.
Explore data-driven insights that blend fact and feeling, designed to enhance your team's connection with Canadians and bolster public trust initiatives.	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	30.

All content in this report is free to distribute with direct credit to "Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Research".

Contact learnmore@foodintegrity.ca for tailored research presentations featuring additional questions and results, demographic breakdowns, and deeper insights.

CCFI Public Trust Research

Objective. Valued. Trusted.

As an **objective** third party, CCFI delivers independent insights into what Canadians think, and what it means for building public trust in our food system. With eight years of data and analysis, our research is consistently ranked as a **valued** resource for members, helping them navigate challenges and seize opportunities. As a **trusted** voice for both Canadians and food system stakeholders, we provide balanced information to guide informed action.



Beyond the Highlights - Unlock Insights as a CCFI Member

This report is a short summary of the highlights of our most recent public trust study. Did you know that CCFI members have access extensive additional research and benefits?

Additional membership perks include:

- Access to full reports (8+ years of additional, response detail, demographic insights)
- Detailed data tables and SPSS files
- Webinars
- Tailored presentations
- Members-only insights to strengthen your public trust strategies

Reach out today to unlock invaluable data-based insights to better-inform your public trust efforts.

For more information on CCFI membership, please visit: <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/about/members/>.



Food for Thought

At CCFI, we don't just present data—we deliver the 'so what,' turning numbers into actionable insights.

Look for our new 'Food for Thought' logo throughout the report, where you'll find strategic analysis and recommendations to help move this research from your bookshelf to your strategic plan.



2024 Public Trust Research

The Fine Print

The What

The overarching objective of this research is to **track key public trust metrics in the Canadian agrifood system and its stakeholders.**

The secondary focus of our research is to explore public perceptions, knowledge, and habits related to the current issues Canadas food system faces.

The How

- A national online survey was conducted from August 8 to 30, 2024th via Ipsos Public Affairs among a large representative sample of 2,852 Canadians aged 18+.
- Quotas and weighting were used to ensure the sample reflects Canadas population according to the most recent census data.
- The precision of online polls is measured using a credibility interval.
- In this case, the results are accurate to within +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian adults been polled.

The Big Shifts

CCFI annual research provides insight into meaningful shifts in public sentiment.

Statistically significant differences between the current wave (2024) and most recent previous waves have been designated by up and down arrows:

▲ Significantly Higher ▼ Significantly Lower

Life and Food in Focus

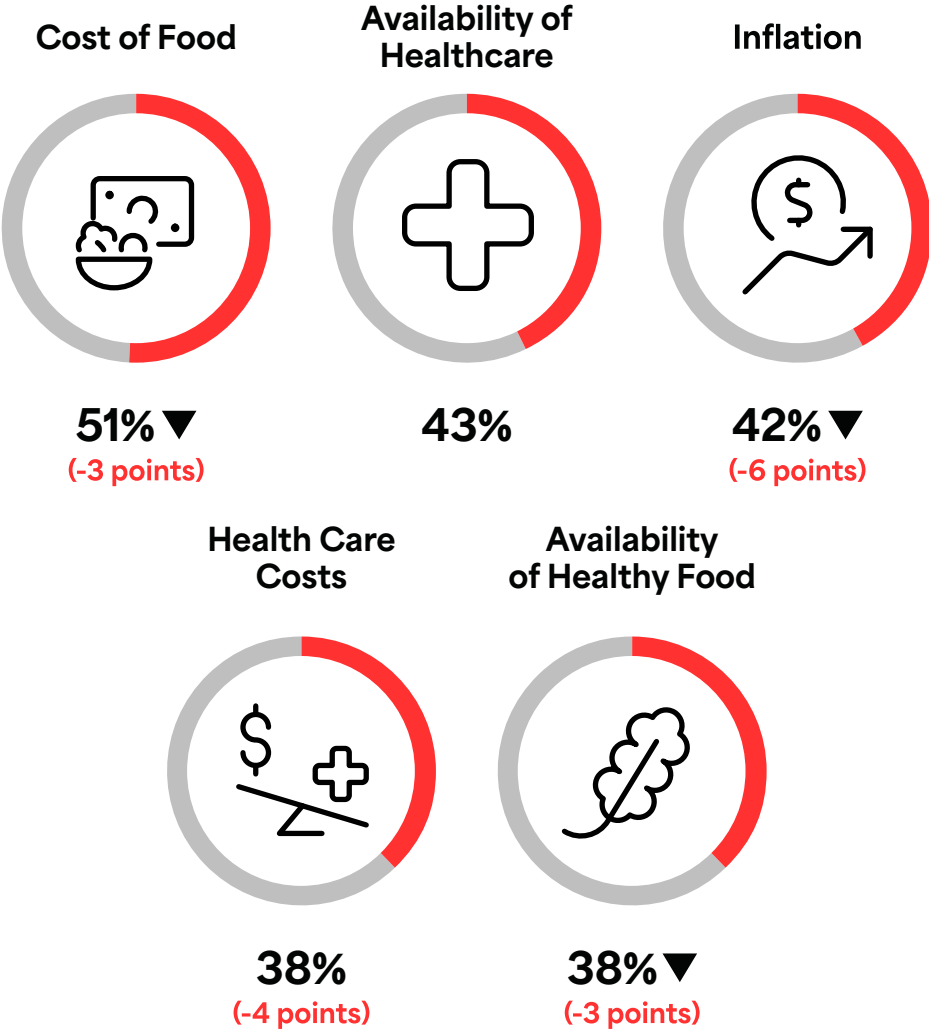


Canadians Share Their Top Concerns

What are Canadians talking about around the dinner table? What topics come up when bumping into a neighbour at the grocery store? Every year, CCFI dives into over 20 "life issues" to uncover these conversations.

Tracking shifts in concern related to food, farming, economic, social, and environmental issues (to name a few) provides an important cultural context that helps to better-understand the rest of our research results.

Top 5 Life Issues



% Very Concerned (Rated 9 - 10)



Cost of food remains top concern among Canadians

Overall affordability-related issues remain top of mind, but less so than in 2023. The fever pitch of food price concern has broken; although half of Canadians are still very concerned when it comes to food costs, there has been a significant three-point decrease compared to last year.

About four in ten Canadians have a high level of concern for the remaining top five issues of health care availability, inflation, health care costs and affordability of healthy food. Concern for all tracked issues has softened significantly, particularly regarding inflation (-6 points).



Food and health are natural partners in your messaging.

Four of the top five life issues for Canadians are related to these themes. By emphasizing health and nutrition information in your communications you are addressing some of Canadians biggest concerns.



Connect with Canadians, not just consumers.

Agrifood system issues don't exist in isolation. By recognizing the bigger picture surrounding your public trust efforts, you can forge deeper, more meaningful connections with Canadians.

Trending Food System Issues

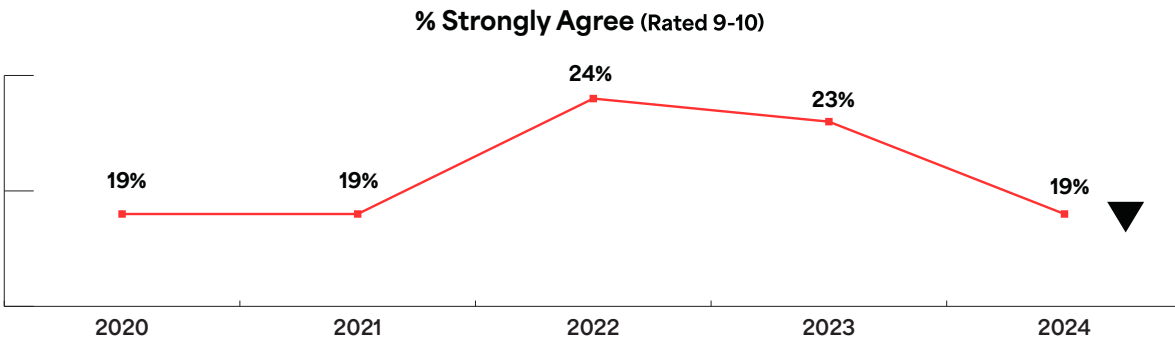
CCFI monitors public sentiment on more than 25 critical food system issues, from food waste and animal welfare to sustainability, greenwashing and beyond.

This year’s report reveals steady or declining concern across the board, with the most notable shifts in public opinion highlighted here.

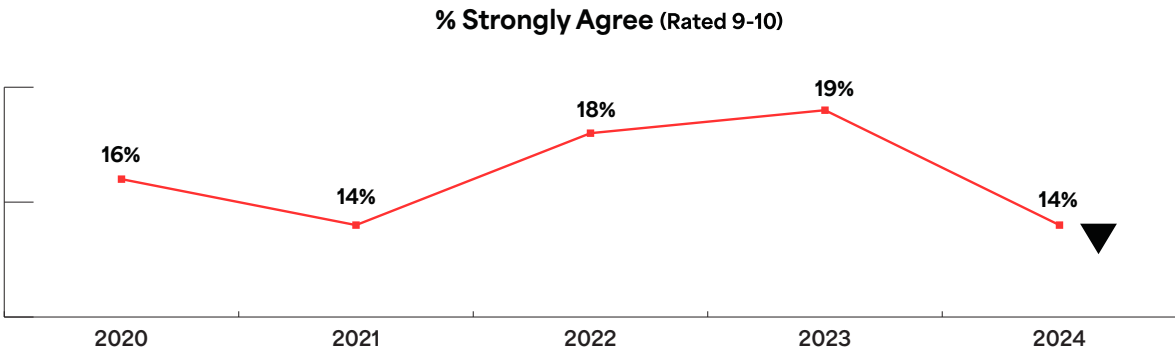
Discover the full story behind the data, explore detailed issue tracking, and stay ahead of emerging challenges in the food system. Become a member today for access to the complete report!

Canadians are less likely to agree that...

“Canadian farmers are good stewards of the environment.”



“I trust that the federal government food inspection system ensures the safety of Canadian Food.”

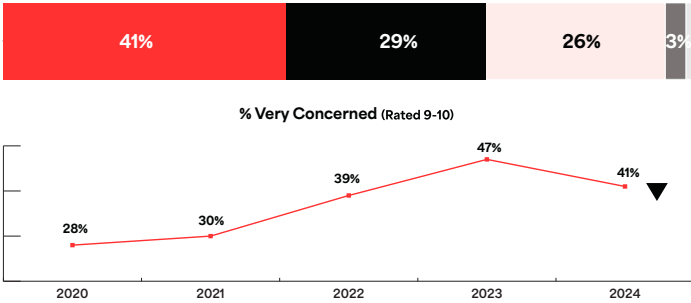


■ 9 - 10 (Agree) ■ 7- 8 ■ 4 - 6 (Neutral) ■ 2 - 3 ■ 0 - 1 (Disagree)

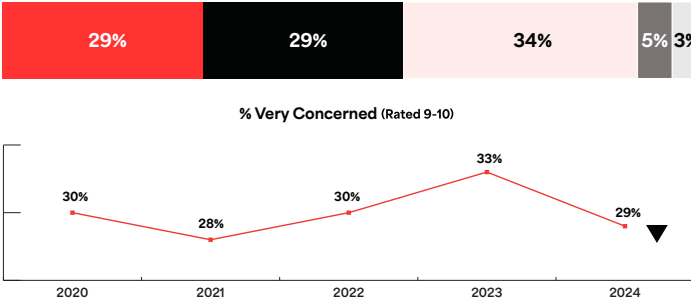
Trending Food System Issues

Canadians are less worried about...

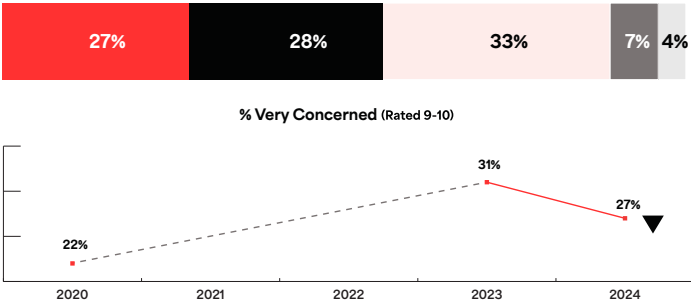
The affordability of healthy food compared to one year ago



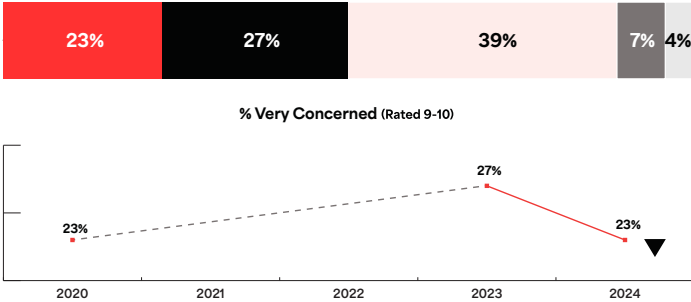
The use of pesticides in crop production



Drug residues in milk, meat & eggs



Drug resistance due to farm animals being given antibiotics



9 - 10 (Very Concerned) 7 - 8 4 - 6 (Neutral) 2 - 3 0 - 1 (Not Concerned)



Canadians may be less worried, but they still care.

While most Canadians remain engaged with nearly all food system issues, the number of those who are “very concerned” has dropped. To keep reducing polarization, let’s steer clear of fear-based messaging and internal blame. Instead, focus on addressing Canadians’ questions about food and agriculture with openness and clarity.

Key Trust Indicators



The Trust Factor(s)



Direction



Impression



Trust



Transparency

Earning public trust is tough, but losing it is easy. The complexity of both public trust and the agrifood system means there's no one-size-fits all measure for success. That's why CCFI doesn't rely on a single data point when assessing trust in the Canadian food system. With years of historical tracking, our Key Trust Indicators offer a comprehensive, multi-dimensional view of how Canadians perceive our food system and its key players.



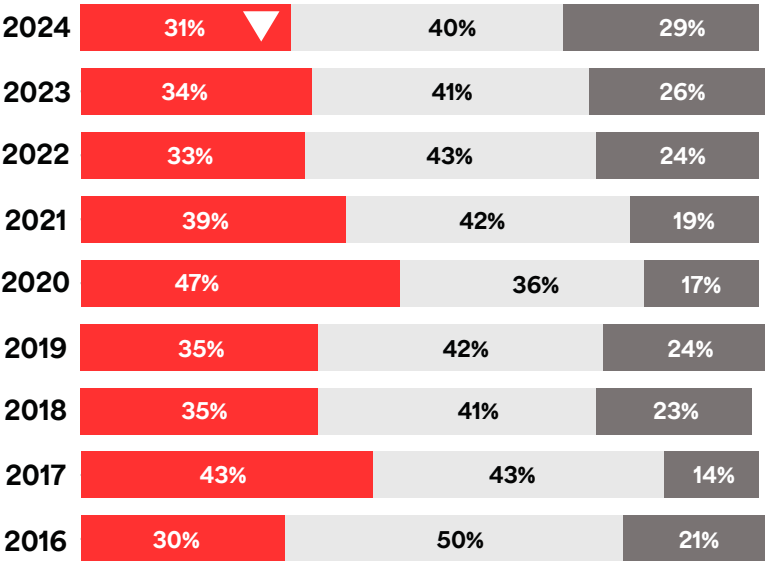
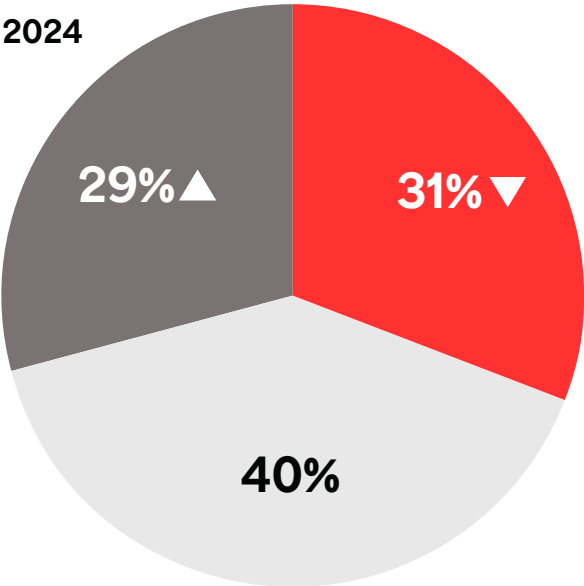
There are no shortcuts to trust.

Building long-term trust requires consistent messaging and actions. Focus on transparency and openness to retain trust.



The Trust Factor(s) ← →

Direction of Canada’s Food System



■ Right Direction ■ Unsure ■ Wrong Direction

For the first time in nine years, Canadians are nearly evenly divided on whether the country’s food system is heading in the right or wrong direction, with only three in ten believing we’re on the right track. Pessimism has hit a record high, with significantly more Canadians feeling uncertain about the future of our food system compared to last year.

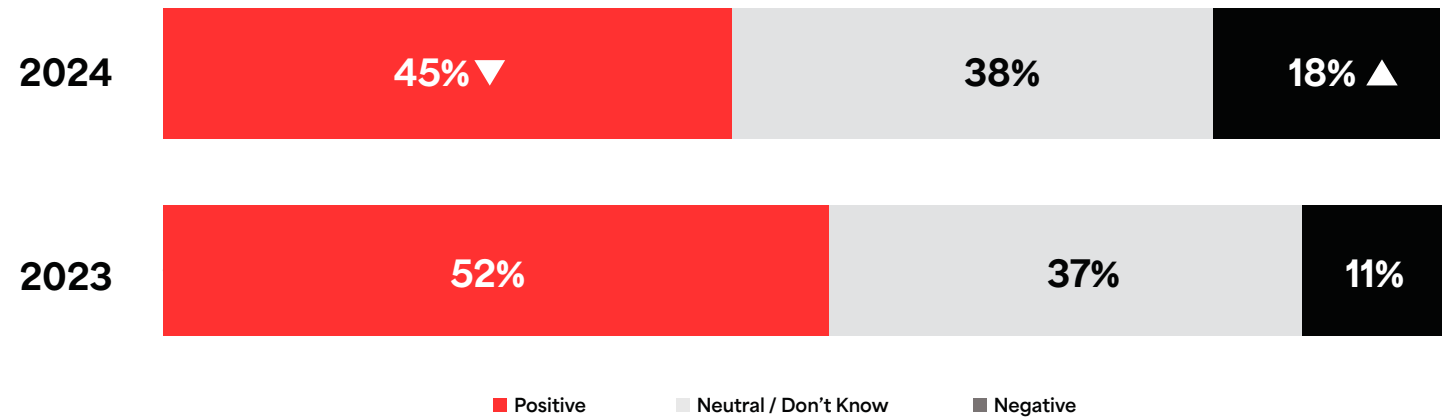


Counter cynicism through transparency.
Address concerns head-on with clear, fact-based information to break down barriers and maintain trust.

The Trust Factor(s)

Impression of Canada’s Food System

Fewer than half of Canadians (45%) now hold a positive view of Canada’s food system, marking a sharp seven-point drop from last year. At the same time, negative impressions have almost doubled, rising from 11% to 18%. Nearly one in five Canadians now feel negatively about the food system—a significant shift from the previous year.



Overall, how would you rate your impression of Canada’s food system, including how food is grown, produced, and sold?

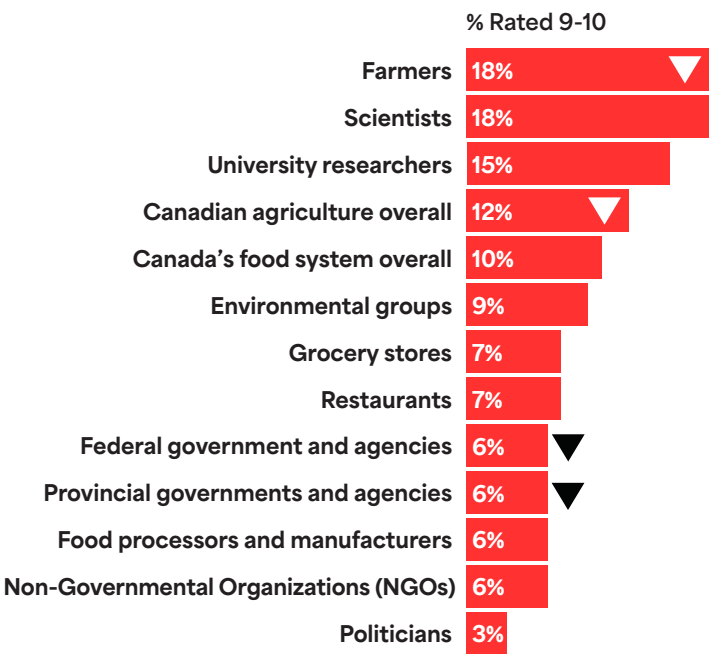


With public sentiment becoming increasingly polarized, indifference is now a public trust threat. When it comes to the direction and impression of the food system, negativity and cynicism are gaining ground faster than both positive and neutral views. To reverse this trend, it’s time to confront myths and misinformation head-on. Get creative, think outside the box, and take bold steps—because the moment for decisive action is now.



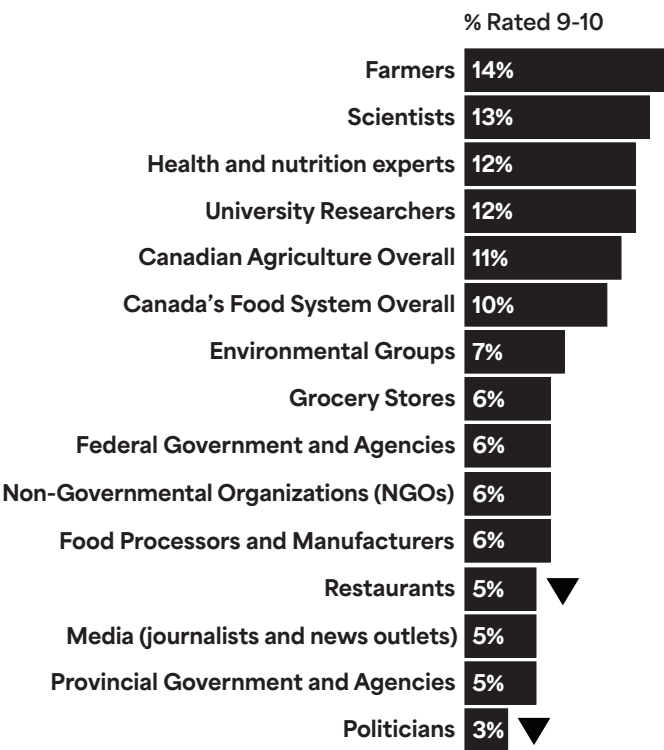
Canadian Food System Key Players

Who is Trusted?



Thinking of the Canadian food system, how would you rate your trust in the following groups?

Who is Honest?



Please indicate how well each of the following groups are doing in providing OPEN AND TRANSPARENT AND HONEST information about how your food is grown or produced so that you can make informed food choices.



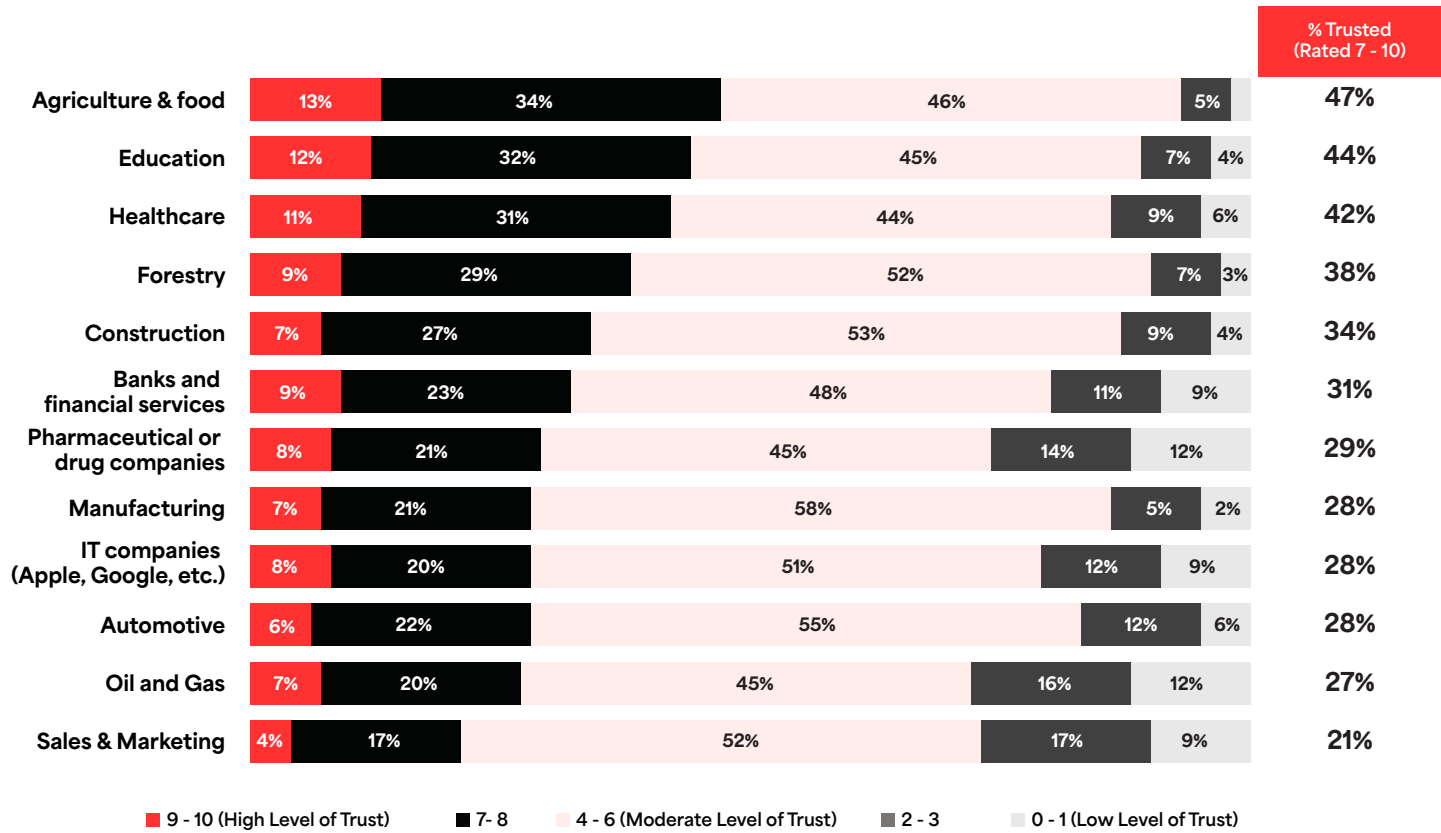
Trust and transparency are in trouble.
Perceptions have either stagnated, or significantly worsened across nearly all stakeholders.

Sector Showdown: Agrifood's Place in the Trust Race



Canadian Agrifood Vs Everyone

Canadian agrifood is the most trusted sector among various industries, but that trust invites scrutiny. Canadians understand the agrifood system's vital role in their lives, fostering strong trust alongside heightened expectations for transparency, sustainability, and accountability.





Key Attribute Rating Summary

Canada’s agriculture and food sector isn’t just the most trusted—it’s also seen as the top performer across **key attributes**. Compared to the second most trusted sector, health care, agrifood leads in economic impact, innovation, honesty, and environmental responsibility. Agrifood out-ranks the oil and gas industry across all six attributes tested.

	Agriculture & Food	Healthcare	Oil & Gas
Economic Impact	1	3	2
Innovation	1	2	3
Honesty	1	2	3
Protecting the Environment	1	2	3
Social Responsibility*	1 (tie)	1 (tie)	2
Affordability	2	1	3

% Excellent / Good (Rated 7 - 10)

* Contributing positively to society and communities

The Canadian agrifood sector now has a chance to redefine itself—not just as farms and factories, but as a powerhouse in the nation’s economic and social future. By highlighting its innovation and sustainability, agrifood should be part of conversations everywhere—from Bay Street to boardrooms, town halls, and coffee shops. With Canadians’ support, we are leading the public trust race.

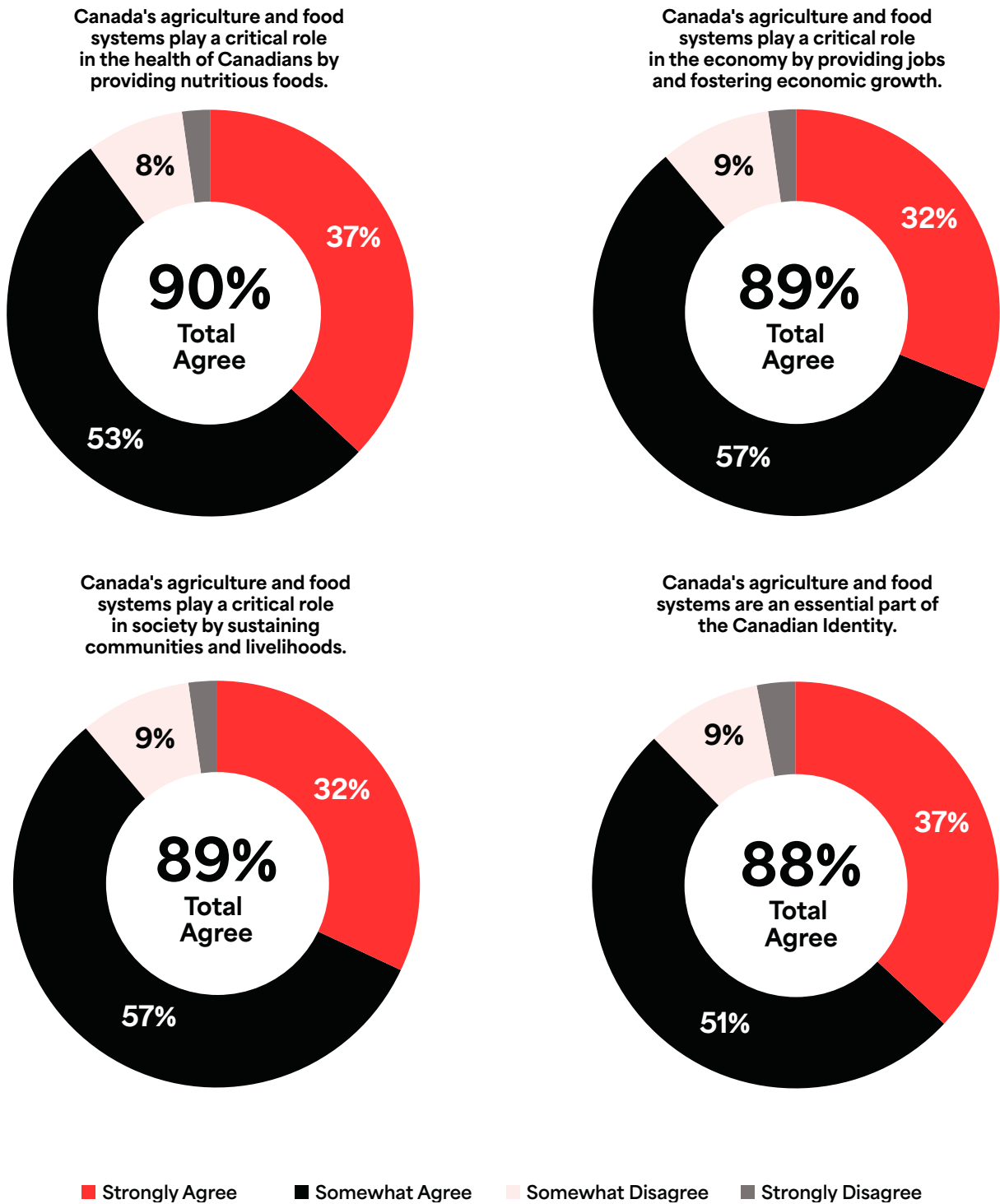


Lead conversations on sustainability and innovation to remain at the forefront of trust.
Canadians are looking to agrifood for leadership in these areas.

The Heart of Canada: Agrifood and Our Shared Values

Messages that Matter: Effective Messages for Canadian Agrifood

The Canadian agriculture and food system’s critical contributions to **health, economic prosperity, community well-being, and national identity** resonate most with Canadians. These findings present a powerful opportunity for the agrifood sector to leverage public sentiment and strengthen trust. By effectively demonstrating these values at work throughout our food system, the Canadian agrifood sector’s position as a trusted pillar of Canadian life can be further strengthened.

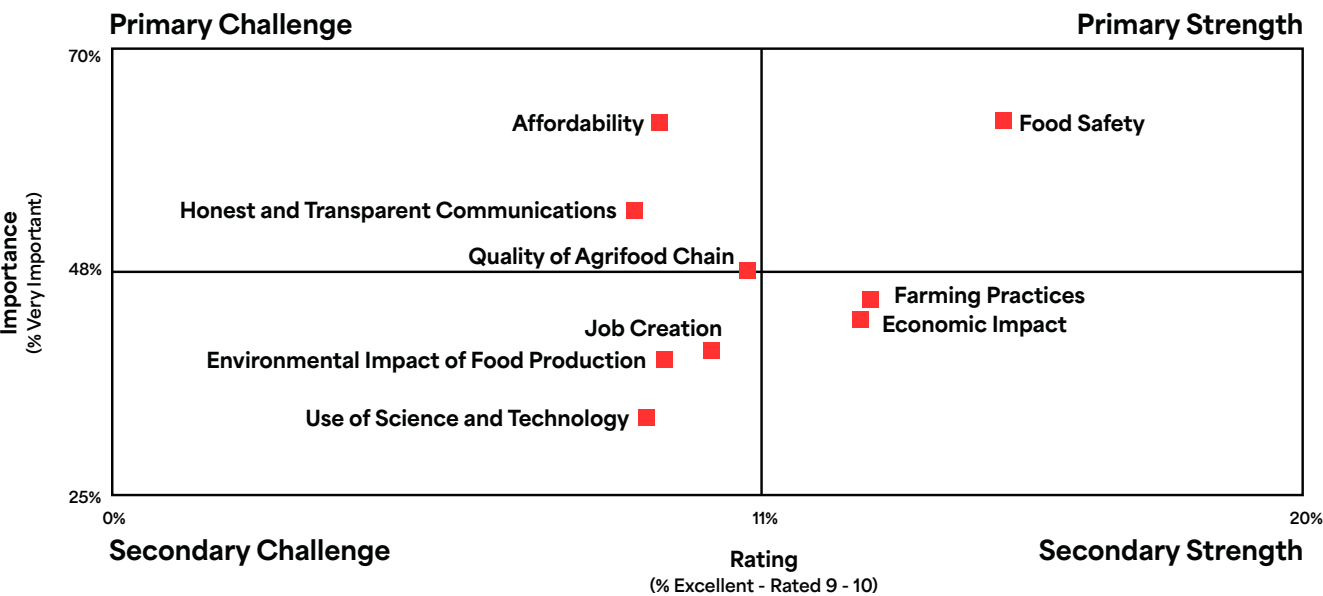




Canadian agrifood uniquely embodies essential societal values by weaving together health, community, and identity in a deeply personal way.

To deepen these connections: think both big and small. Collaborate across the agrifood sector to celebrate agrifood's cultural significance as a cornerstone of Canadian identity. At the same time, showcase your direct impact on health, job creation, and community engagement through meaningful interactions with Canadians.

Attributes of Canada’s Food System



CCFI’s Action Grid analysis of Canada’s agrifood industry provides a high-level overview of public perceptions regarding key issues that significantly impact the sector. This analysis highlights strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, offering valuable insights into how Canadians view various aspects of agrifood.

Strengths

(high importance + high rating)

- The safety of food grown and produced in Canada
- Canadian farming practices
- Economic impact

Weaknesses

(high importance + low rating)

- Affordability
- Transparent Communications

Opportunities

(low importance + moderate rating)

- Science and Technology

Food for Thought

Unlock new opportunities for trust through science and innovation.

By actively promoting the advancements and benefits of scientific and technological innovations—such as sustainable farming practices and food safety measures—agrifood leaders can bridge the knowledge gap, engage with Canadians, and demonstrate their commitment to transparency and progress.

Top 20 Food for Thought Insights From the 2024 Public Trust Research

Where Fact and Feeling Meet

CCFI's research is meant for action, and we want to get you started today. Whether you're in marketing, communications, policy, or evaluation – these data-based insights are meant to help your team better-connect with Canadians and strengthen your public trust efforts.



Top 20 Food for Thought Insights From the 2024 Public Trust Research

1.

Leverage Trust to Drive Engagement

Align your messaging with values Canadians care about, such as health, affordability, and sustainability, to build stronger public relationships.

2.

Transparency is a Two-Way Street

Use feedback from research to create content that answers Canadians' questions. Proactive transparency enhances credibility.

3.

Showcase Innovation with Tangible Examples

Highlight advancements in sustainability and food safety to demonstrate progress and humanize your organization.

4.

Build Trust Across Multiple Channels

Consistent messaging across platforms like social media and community outreach reinforces credibility and trust.

5.

From Data to Dialogue

Use research to start meaningful conversations with Canadians about their concerns and values, showcasing commitment to transparency.

6.

Humanize Your Communications

Sharing stories about the people behind your organization fosters emotional connections and makes your messaging relatable.

7.

Tackle Misinformation Head-On

Address common myths or misconceptions about the food system with clear, fact-based messages, establishing your organization as a reliable source.

8.

Collaborate with Other Trusted Voices

Partner with trusted organizations or influencers to broaden your message's reach and build trust across different public segments.

9.

Make the Data Work for You

Tailor messaging based on trends in public sentiment revealed in the research. Focus on areas like affordability and transparency to rebuild trust.

10.

Move Beyond Facts to Empathy

Show empathy for Canadians' concerns, like rising costs or food security, to build a deeper level of trust.

11.

Highlight Local Impact

Emphasize the local benefits of your operations, such as job creation and community outreach, to build stronger connections with Canadians.

12.

Turn Data into Actionable Steps

Provide clear recommendations and next steps based on the report's findings, guiding members on strategic actions.

13.

Educate with Simplicity

Keep messaging simple and accessible, explaining complex topics like food safety or sustainability in a way that everyone can understand.

14.

Focus on Long-Term Consistency

Trust is built over time. Consistently address public concerns to maintain and grow trust.

15.

Measure and Adapt Your Approach

Regularly assess the effectiveness of your public trust strategies and adapt to shifts in public perception or emerging concerns.

16.

Acknowledge Challenges but Offer Solutions

Be open about the challenges facing the sector, positioning your organization as a problem-solver by offering practical solutions.

17.

Trust is Built Through Shared Values

Align your messaging with core Canadian values like health, sustainability, and ethics, demonstrating that your organization shares these values.

18.

Empower Consumers with Information

Provide Canadians with clear, transparent information to help them make informed decisions, reinforcing trust through education.

19.

Promote Sustainability as a Core Value

Highlight your commitment to sustainability and responsible practices to meet Canadians' expectations for transparency in food production.

20.

Use Emotion to Deepen Engagement

Share emotionally resonant stories about your work—whether through farmers or community impact—to foster deeper connections and trust.



Cross-check your public efforts against this list - are you hitting the mark?

Acknowledgements

CCFI Research Advisory Committee

A sincere thanks to CCFI's Research Advisory Committee members for sharing their time, insights and expertise that have shaped the 2024 Public Trust Research and beyond.

Adele Buettner*

Founder and President, AgriBiz Communications Corporation

Lisa Bishop-Spencer

Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

Amie Peck

Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Canadian Cattle Association

Mike Dungate*

Governance Professional, Past Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada

Ashley Bruner

Director of Research and Stakeholder Engagement, Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

Spencer Henson

Professor, University of Guelph – Department of Food, Agriculture & Resource Economics and Guelph Institute of Developmental Studies

Dr. Ellen Goddard

Professor Emerita, University of Alberta

Stephane Beaudoin*

President, Gestbeau Inc.

Erin O'Hara

Vice-President, Communications and Member Services, CropLife Canada

Timothy Kennedy*

President and CEO, Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance

*CCFI Board Members

Our Appreciation

The Canadian Food for Integrity benefits from a strong and engaged Board of Directors. Unique in experience, perspectives, and geography, CCFI's mission is continually served through the board's guidance. Thank you to all board members for their support to pursue data-driven public trust efforts.



Centre canadien
pour l'intégrité
alimentaire



Canadian
Centre for
Food Integrity

