



Best Practices

for Consumer Engagement
in Agriculture and Agri-Food

2024



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

Canada

Acknowledgment

This document was written by the lead consultant on this project, Crowley + Arklie Strategy & Co., based on existing research and results of one-on-one interviews with members of the Consumer Engagement Working Group (sub group under the Consumer Demand and Market Trends Table) and other industry experts. The content is relevant to the broad agriculture and agri-food sector (henceforth referred to as the "sector" or "industry").

The development of this document was led by the Consumer Demand and Market Trends Table and its Consumer Engagement Working Group. The mandate of the table is to "better understand domestic and international consumer values, preferences, and expectations; identify key, value-add domestic and international consumer market trends and growth opportunities; and identify approaches to building public trust for key consumer concerns."

The table's strategic plan includes five initiatives supported by the Consumer Engagement Working Group:

- Developing best practices for consumer engagement,
- Developing a unified consumer engagement plan,
- Encouraging consumer acceptance of forecasted innovation and technology,
- Providing the consumer perspective in terms of establishing assurance systems; and
- Providing the consumer perspective in terms of advancing assurance systems.

The last two initiatives are paused until completion of the National Index on Agri-Food Performance.

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Disclaimer

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The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the opinions or interests of the entire Consumer Demand and Market Trends Table membership or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), nor does it necessarily reflect the opinions or interests of all parties interviewed during research for this report. The recommendations in the report are not binding on any participant of the Table or AAFC.

Best Practices for Consumer Engagement in Agriculture and Agri-Food, 2024

@ His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, 2024.

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01. Purpose of Best Practices

Many agriculture and agri-food stakeholders, led by the work of the Consumer Demand and Market Trends Table and its Consumer Engagement Working Group, identified the need for a Best Practices for Consumer Engagement tool that focuses on how to engage with Canadian consumers. This builds upon work over the last two decades relating to social licence and public trust.

The Best Practices tool for Consumer Engagement in Agriculture and Agri-Food was created as an industry tool. This tool intends to deepen the industry's understanding and knowledge of how consumer engagement is being addressed; provide information on how to understand the Canadian consumer of today better; and provide practical and applicable tips, tools and resources on consumer engagement for Canadian agriculture and agri-food stakeholders.

The Best Practices tool is meant to be an evergreen document, also known as a living or dynamic document, that is edited and updated annually as the landscape of consumer engagement and public trust changes and evolves for agriculture and food in Canada.

The goal of the Best Practices is to be the go-to industry resource for industry stakeholders to learn how to better engage with Canadian consumers and better understand how to further leverage collaboration, cooperation and partnerships amongst industry stakeholders to build trust in Canada's food system collectively.

As the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) referenced in its 2023 Public Trust Research Report, "Growing public trust in Canada's food and agriculture industry is not achieved through a single advertising campaign, infographic, or shiny website. Public trust is a nuanced concept requiring a long-term commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement." [1]

Despite using similar tools, marketing aims to increase sales while consumer engagement aims to correct misinformation and disinformation.

The Best Practices tool will help to inform the agriculture and agri-food industry about what is currently being done and how the industry can collaborate to have a more unified approach to best engage with consumers about Canada's food system.



[1] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/download-2023-research-report/>
Photo courtesy of [FarmPhotos.ca](https://www.farmphotos.ca/)

02. Why Consumer Engagement and Trust, and Why Now

Canada's food system has an incredible opportunity to build trust with domestic consumers. The scope of this potential depends on the extent that industry works together in promoting important messaging and building relationships with Canadian consumers in a unified way.

The industry has all the right ingredients – something consumers require (food); high-quality products that are grown, produced and harvested in Canada; farmers and people along the value chain that have captivating stories to share; mediums and platforms available to tell these stories; engaged consumers asking questions about their food and agricultural practices; and most importantly, research shows that agriculture and agri-food is a trusted industry at a time where trust is eroding.

This trust should not be taken for granted because it is an important factor in building stronger relationships with today's consumers.

Indeed, consumer engagement “involves building relationships with customers at every touch point... the ultimate goal of customer engagement is to build lasting and mutually beneficial relationships with customers, leading to an increased lifetime value for the brand.”^[2]

Actively engaging with consumers is the most effective way for the agriculture and agri-food industry to work towards building deeper, more meaningful, and lasting relationships with consumers that ultimately lead to further long-term trust in the industry.

The industry has focused on the terms “social licence” and “public trust” since this important conversation began two decades ago, but Canadian consumers don't know what these words mean in relation to their food.

Instead, the industry should lead with consumer engagement, which could take many forms, including:

- seeking and meeting consumers where they are on their food journeys
- having informal conversations with consumers using language they understand
- keeping consumers in mind when developing marketing materials and communication strategies, and
- most importantly, storytelling to have impactful conversations with consumers.

The industry's relationship with Canadian consumers impacts the entire agriculture and agri-food value chain. For example, sharing challenges and opportunities in everyday operations in a transparent, vulnerable and authentic way will be the first important step required to engage consumers and show them that the industry strives to lead in a sustainable, mutually beneficial way long into the future.

Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry has some of the best stories to be told. Let's get storytelling.



[2] <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/customer-engagement/>
Photo courtesy of [FarmPhotos.ca](https://www.farmphotos.ca)

03. Understanding the Industry's Commitment to Building Public Trust

Everyone can relate to Canada's food system – food is something we all have in common as Canadians despite our differences.

The industry is doing great work in this space, with many organizations, associations and businesses now dedicating full-time staff positions to public trust and advocacy. These roles share sustainable and ethical production practices through social media posts, for example. However, the industry as a whole cannot assume that Canadian consumers know about the innovative work being done behind the scenes to advance farm safety, animal welfare and sustainability as an example. As a result, the industry should communicate this work in a strategic, engaging, consistent and unified way, so consumers hear, understand and connect with it.

10 Observations in Building Public Trust

There are important observations in building public trust in Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry that are key in understanding how to apply best practices for consumer engagement:

1. A great deal of work is being done on public trust. The industry is committed to building public trust. To further move the needle, the industry should approach this work in a coordinated and collaborative manner, leading with consumers in mind first.
2. "Public trust" does not have a simple definition. Consumers may be unaware of the term "public trust" in relation to their food and if they do know the term, they interpret "public trust" definitions differently and are unsure as to how it applies to their food. Also, uncertainty lies in the industry's "public trust" plan moving forward and who should lead these efforts.

3. Research indicates agriculture and agri-food is a trusted industry. Research reports and polls show that consumers trust the industry and that farmers are the most trusted stakeholder in the food system.^[3] However, more research should be done to better understand the factors underlying this trust to continue to improve and best leverage farmers' voices. Further research is also required to address the 41% of Canadian consumers who are unsure how they feel about Canada's food system.^[4]
4. The industry should have a stronger sense of how consumers think and feel – and lead communication efforts with them in mind. The industry should work collectively to better understand the Canadian consumer by focusing on the social sciences behind consumer behaviour. This work will help to better understand how to ask consumers to share in the responsibility of managing the food system with the industry and how they would prefer to be engaged.
5. Consumers should be engaged through storytelling. The industry should communicate messages to consumers through storytelling, rather than leading with facts and figures. The industry should humanize people and practices to connect with consumers in a way that is more appealing and better understood.^[5]
6. There isn't a clearly defined target audience in industry communication efforts. The industry can't speak to every Canadian consumer through generic campaigns, resources and marketing-communication efforts. Creating campaigns and resources with tailored key messages on specific platforms and mediums, aimed at a specific target audience is needed.

[3] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/download-2023-research-report/>

[4] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/download-2023-research-report/>

[5] https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_stories_change_brain

7. A unified voice is essential to enhance public trust. Many organizations across the industry are committed to public trust, advocacy and agricultural awareness efforts. However, when consumers have questions about their food and agricultural practices, who does the industry expect the consumers to turn to for answers? Instead of a commodity-specific approach, the industry should consider taking a unified approach to amplify a common campaign and key messages to consumers in a coordinated effort.
8. A common goal should be established. Ideally, a common marketing-communications goal should be established for the industry to streamline efforts. By beginning with the end in mind and knowing what the industry aims to achieve, it helps to know what should be done along the way for better goal setting, benchmarking and ultimately, success.
9. Measuring and benchmarking success are important. To know if public trust efforts are working for the long-term, there should be a defined set of benchmarks that are collectively used to measure efforts. Determining key performance indicators (KPIs) and annually measuring industry-wide efforts would be beneficial to know what is and isn't working.
10. Collaboration is required across the value chain. It is widely known that the industry operates in silos when it comes to public trust. To enhance industry-wide strategic consumer engagement efforts, further collaboration is required with stakeholders and partners across the value chain. Some collaborative efforts may include sharing resources and research reports; partnering on research efforts; learning from corresponding campaigns and marketing initiatives; collaborating on campaigns where/when possible; and sharing and learning from successes and failures in consumer engagement efforts.

10 Observations in Building Public Trust

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2. "Public trust" does not have a simple definition.
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5. Consumers should be engaged through storytelling.
6. There isn't a clearly defined target audience in industry communication efforts.
7. A unified voice is essential to enhance public trust.
8. A common goal should be established.
9. Measuring and benchmarking should be done.
10. Collaboration is required across the food value chain.

Areas of Strength in Consumer Engagement

- Multiple research sources confirm work is being done on public trust. The industry is trusted, and consumers see the Canadian farmer as the most trusted stakeholder in the food system. This trust is valuable but should not be taken for granted.
- Public trust models are strong across Canada with many organizations actively dedicating human resources, staffing and budget/funding to public trust efforts.
- The next generation of farmers and industry leaders understand the importance of the relationship between farmers and consumers as well as the value in engaging with them differently by employing new methods, mediums, and platforms to strengthen consumers' trust in their food and the people who grow it.
- The industry has embraced social media and digital mediums to engage with consumers through campaigns, platforms and websites that are now reaching millions of consumers. However, there is still work to be done to engage with the Canadian consumers who do not know about these efforts and the consumers who are indifferent to the industry's efforts.
- The industry remains open, willing, curious and committed to continually evolving, adapting and changing to address consumers' trust in food – this is critically important.

Areas of Improvement in Consumer Engagement

- While the industry has done a commendable job with collaborative efforts, including [Farm & Food Care](#), [CCFI](#) and [Canadian Food Focus](#) as examples, the industry as a whole still continues to operate in silos. Opportunities exist to further partner with, learn from and leverage existing organizations, resources and campaigns in public trust work that would help with overall consumer engagement efforts.
- Trust is built with stories that connect with other human beings. Trust is developed on a personal level. The industry should better leverage storytelling to share the story of agriculture and agri-food in Canada. Industry stakeholders should humanize themselves and personalize stories in a more captivating and relatable way to consumers. Storytelling will help foster and build deeper relationships with consumers.
- The passion and pride the industry has for what it produces and grows can sometimes impact how it presumes consumers perceive agriculture and agri-food. This oversight can lead to defensive responses to consumer misinformation, accusations and misunderstanding. Opportunities exist for the industry to respond more objectively by better understanding its consumers' knowledge base and where consumers are coming from.
- The industry tends to lead marketing and communication efforts by putting the thoughts and feelings of the industry's perception of an issue/topic first, rather than leading with how the consumer feels. Addressing how the consumer thinks and feels and putting them at the heart of "the why" will be a critical step in furthering consumer engagement.

Areas of Improvement in Consumer Engagement Continued

- The industry should be aware and stay atop of topics that may be of growing importance to consumers and address how to respond proactively versus reactively to these topics. Proactively communicating the impacts of modern technology in food production, such as 3D food printing, gene editing and cellular agriculture as examples (refer to glossary of terms within appendix), can help minimize misinformation from the beginning. According to the 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer, “When people feel in control over how innovations affect their lives, they are more likely to embrace them, not resist them.”^[6]

While the industry is doing commendable work in public trust, bolstering consumer engagement efforts is an area of priority that the industry should embrace.

In summary, actions the industry can take to further build and enhance public trust include dismantling silos across the industry by partnering with fellow stakeholders and partners, connecting with consumers on shared values and sharing stories that humanize the industry to make it more relatable to consumers.



[6] https://www.edelman.ca/sites/g/files/aatuss376/files/2024-03/2024%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer_Canada%20Report_EN_0.pdf
Photo courtesy of [FarmPhotos.ca](https://www.farmphotos.ca)

Areas of Strength

- The industry is trusted.
- Public trust work is strong within organizations across the industry.
- Farmers and industry leaders understand the importance of the relationship between farmers and consumers.
- The industry has embraced social media and digital marketing.
- The industry remains committed to evolving as it should.

Areas of Improvement

- The industry still continues to operate in silos.
- The industry should better leverage storytelling to share the story of agriculture and agri-food in Canada to further trust.
- Opportunities exist for the industry to respond more objectively by better understanding where consumers are coming from.
- The industry should lead efforts in addressing how consumers feel, rather than leading with facts.
- The industry should be aware and stay atop of topics that may be of growing importance to consumers.

04. Understanding Consumers of Today

Understanding the Canadian consumer of today – their values, behaviours, purchasing habits and food needs – is how the industry can begin to better engage with them. The industry should change how it engages with consumers by leading communication efforts with consumers in mind. The goal of such efforts should not be to sell a product, but rather to build strong, long-term relationships with consumers so they trust people from the industry. This way, consumers will know who/where to turn when looking for accurate answers to their questions about food.

Leading with consumers in mind, putting consumers at the heart of what the industry does and approaching topics with empathy are foundational to understand how to best engage with consumers. The industry can build upon its foundation of consumer engagement efforts by being mindful of different lived experiences that shape people's perceptions and the general trends of consumer behaviour and psychology when it comes to food and trust.

What do Canadian consumers have on their plates nowadays? A lot. And how does this relate to agriculture and agri-food and consumer perception of food in Canada? Many ways. There are a number of qualitative and quantitative research resources about consumer behaviour as it relates to food and agriculture in Canada, including [AAFC's Consumer trends and behaviours towards Canadian agriculture and agri-foods research reports](#) and [CCFI's Public Trust Research Reports](#).

10 Observations to Better Understand the Consumer of Today

There are important observations in building public trust in Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry that are key in understanding how to apply best practices for consumer engagement:

1. There is an erosion of trust. Trust, or the erosion of trust, is impacting all industries as Canadians become less trustworthy of institutions, organizations, brands and businesses. As a result, consumers are left

wondering "who" to trust. For the first time ever, the Edelman Canada Trust Barometer Report shares that when it comes to the dispersion of authority for whom Canadians trust to tell them the truth about new innovations and technologies, "someone like me" leads at 77% before scientists at 74%.

2. Misinformation and disinformation are widespread. Since misinformation and disinformation are prevalent, particularly online, they are key concerns for consumers, which is most likely why they're asking more questions – not just about their food, but about everything. Fear-based marketing with click-bait headlines and images has added to this rise in misinformation, especially on social media.
3. Consumers are dealing with many issues. A post-pandemic world is still being defined and it's left consumers continually facing the unknown. For example: a new hybrid workforce, inflation, higher interest rates, soaring costs, natural disasters, rapidly evolving technology and geopolitical issues around the world. All of these issues have left consumers feeling overwhelmed.
4. Most consumers live in urban centres – it's why there's a lack of understanding of where their food comes from. The "rural-urban" divide and the disconnect between proximity and exposure have left Canadians with a lack of understanding about where their food comes from, and the agricultural practices required to produce it. This is a reality that should be accepted.
5. Consumers don't compartmentalize issues or commodities when it comes to their food. Consumer view food issues as a whole, not issue by issue that only impact one commodity. For example, a consumer can express concern about pesticides, animal welfare, food safety, and genetic engineering in one exchange. Because of the industry's deep understanding of the Canadian food system, stakeholders tend to approach topics based on their role in the value chain and/or the commodity they represent. Canadian consumers don't do this; they look at issues from a broader "food" perspective rather than from an "agriculture" or commodity-specific perspective.

6. Consumers aren't thinking about agriculture, they're thinking about food and most likely food prices. Recent public opinion research on consumer perception highlights, "Food prices are a dominant factor, which have become a pain point." For example, "80% of Canadians are at least moderately concerned about food affordability, which is a 29% increase since 2020, while 61% are very concerned."^[8] It's hard to communicate with consumers about topics such as sustainability and building trust from an agricultural point of view when a major pain point for consumers is food affordability.

7. Consumers don't know where to find trusted information about their food. When most consumers have questions about their food – how it's grown, where it comes from, who grows it – the first tools they'll most likely use are search engines such as Google and YouTube. The first link, resource or person that appears, due to search engine optimization (SEO), is most likely what they'll read. Consumers are seeking answers and information, but many industry resources may not be the first source they discover online to answer their questions.

8. Loud consumers with opinions on food are the minority. Many times, the industry reacts and responds to the loud minority of consumers who have strong opinions on single topics or a more activist-focused agenda. These vocal few generally do not represent the stance of most consumers who are called the "silent majority." Many consumers are neutral in their stance on timely food and agriculture issues. The industry should target indifferent consumers and build their trust in agriculture.

9. Consumers should be met where they are on their food journeys. This act shows that the industry is open and receptive to learning about consumers and forming deeper, more long-term relationships with consumers. As a result, the industry will become a more relied-upon source when consumers need answers. For example, the industry should better understand how consumers think and feel about their food, how and where they make food purchasing

decisions, and their path-to-purchase journeys before, during and after the grocery store.

10. Ask consumers to share in the responsibility of the food system. Many consumers trust farmers but are less trustworthy of production practices and especially of grocers and "corporate" agriculture and agri-food. To help build long-term, meaningful trust for food and agriculture in Canada, the industry should ask consumers to share in the responsibility of the food system. By asking consumers 1) to share how they own and value their food, 2) who they trust and source information from and 3) what they want from their food and agricultural practices, it signals that they play a significant role in shaping the future of our food system.

10 Observations to Better Understand the Consumer of Today

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3. Consumers are dealing with many issues.
4. Most consumers live in urban centres – it's why there's a lack of understanding of where their food comes from.
5. Consumers don't compartmentalize issues or commodities when it comes to their food.
6. Consumers aren't thinking about agriculture, they're thinking about food and most likely food prices.
7. Consumers don't know where to find trusted information about their food.
8. Loud consumers with opinions on food are the minority.
9. Consumers should be met where they are on their food journeys.
10. Ask consumers to share in the responsibility of the food system.

[8] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/download-2023-research-report/>

05. Strategic Path Forward to Consumer Engagement

It's simple, the industry should listen to Canadian consumers and not be afraid to provide transparent answers to the questions they're asking. Research shows that knowledge and familiarity is correlated with more positive views and trust. Asking consumers further questions about what areas of the food system they trust, what areas they distrust, what they'd like to know based on what issues matter most to them is how the industry can begin to show a level of transparency and vulnerability that is required to enhance trust in the industry.

Stakeholders along the entire food value chain can take on different roles, responsibilities, and actions to initiate and continue consumer engagement. From farmers and industry professionals to content creators and influencers, to board members and government officials, everyone along the value chain has different capacities and expertise that will help play a role in communicating, interacting and engaging with consumers.

Five Strategic Recommendations for Consumer Engagement

1. Build trust first.

Many stakeholders within the industry are keen to engage on the issues of most concern to Canadian consumers. However, it is necessary to first build trust, and/or reinforce pre-existing trust, before effective engagement can occur. Without trust and with inconsistency between commitment and information, it is possible for consumers to experience a type of cognitive dissonance, which is "the discomfort a person feels when their behavior does not align with their values or beliefs."^[9] This is how consumers may feel when it comes to food and production practices in the industry (e.g., one way to reduce this discomfort is denying evidence that does not fit their current behaviour or attitude). Transparency, leading with shared values and two-way dialogue, can help build trust where there is low or little trust.

For example, proactively sharing information builds consumer trust and expressing shared values with consumers can be an effective starting point. Allowing consumers to start the two-way dialogue when they feel most comfortable can help them feel heard and their voice valued.

2. Utilize and capitalize on digital marketing and social media.

Social media is proving to be the leading driver in how consumers search and find information and where they want to have conversations. Consumers are looking online for "someone like them" for content they trust. It's where they seek out experts, thought leaders and influencers for information on things that matter to them. Being a part of communities that speak to their interests is important to consumers of today. The industry should tailor online efforts to where the target audience is and provide content from people they trust.

3. Leverage who is most trusted – Canadian farmers.

One of the greatest ways the industry can connect with consumers is through the trust they have in Canadian farmers. The industry can use personal stories, including farmers who share why they farm, why they enjoy growing food for Canadians, what their day-to-day looks like and the challenges they face. Storytelling offers relatability to consumers before initiating conversations about production practices. Scientists, industry professionals and experts across the value chain who are respected in their networks are also trusted and can play a role in storytelling.

[9] <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cognitive%20dissonance>

4. Dedicate time, resources, budget, strategy and staff to consumer engagement.

Where possible, it would be beneficial if all industry organizations, associations and/or businesses could ensure consumer engagement efforts are included in strategic plans and marketing and communications efforts. This would address the industry's goal for a more unified approach to collectively building public trust.

5. Collaborate with fellow stakeholders.

The industry should work more collaboratively to dismantle the silos that exist on consumer engagement efforts. Such collaborative efforts could include sharing resources, research and reports; learning from each other's campaigns and marketing initiatives; collaborating on campaigns where/when possible, with consistent messaging; and partnering on research efforts with fellow industry stakeholders.

Five Strategic Recommendations for Consumer Engagement

1. Build trust first.
2. Utilize and capitalize on digital marketing and social media.
3. Leverage who is most trusted – Canadian farmers.
4. Dedicate time, resources, budget, strategy and staff to consumer engagement.
5. Collaborate with fellow stakeholders.



06. Defining Target Audiences for Consumer Engagement

The industry cannot be everything to everyone. Segmenting and defining an ideal target audience is advantageous to tailor campaign messages and mediums to address a specific audience and their needs.

The first important step in consumer engagement is understanding and knowing the target audience. This ensures the industry knows who it's speaking to, understands their specific needs, delivers the correct messages, in the way they want to hear it and on the medium(s) they prefer. As the industry further develops its consumer engagement efforts, it should be specific about who it's talking to, down to their age, interests and beliefs.

In CCFI's 2018 Public Trust Report, it was the first time consumer archetypes were identified through an innovative approach described as digital ethnography. This research looked to "understand [consumer] behaviors, beliefs, values and fears." Through the work done by CCFI, five consumer archetypes were revealed, including the Challenger (fight for what is right); the Investigator (solid research clearly presented); the Institutionalists (strong public institutions); the Follower (the majority rules); and the Competitor (market competition).^[10]

Most recently, AAFC released its 2023 Public Opinion Quantitative Research Report that found the "more knowledgeable of the sector one feels they are, the more favourable an opinion they tend to hold of it." So, as the industry develops key messages for its target audience, keep in mind "that cultivating higher levels of knowledge will likely help to maintain a high degree of favourable opinion towards the sector."^[11]

This recent research by AAFC led to dividing the population into four distinct consumer segments that are valuable to consider in consumer engagement efforts.^[12]

4 Distinct Consumer Segments

Champions of the Industry (37%)

Currently, more than a third of the population (37%) are what we might call Champions of the Industry. The group provides "very positive" or "somewhat positive" views on both their level of knowledge and impression of the industry. The industry should monitor this group since they are fully supportive and could be leveraged to spread informed positivity to others.

Benign Unfamiliar (24%)

The next segment, the Benign Unfamiliar, represent a quarter of the population (24%) – people who do not describe themselves as "very positive" or "somewhat positive" views but who nevertheless give the industry the benefit of the doubt and rate it favourably. Their opinions do not need to be altered but providing them with a greater sense of knowledge about the industry could help solidify their positive sentiments and potentially "upgrade" them to champions who confidently defend or endorse the industry.

Unconvinced Unfamiliar (26%)

The third segment, the Unconvinced Unfamiliar, represent about a quarter of the population (26%). These people do not feel knowledgeable about the industry and refrain from providing favourable impressions, but they don't necessarily hold negative opinions of the industry. In fact, 67% of this group rate their impression as neutral and another 15% do not offer a rating, leaving only 18% of this segment who feel negatively towards the industry. With the clear correlation between knowledge and favourability, the strategic imperative would be to target these Canadians with knowledge-building strategies. From other research, this segment of society may include people who are less open to new information on topics, but the potential for cultivating a favourable impression nonetheless remains.

[10] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ENG2018Summit-ResearchBook-LR-single.pdf>

[11] https://epe.bac-lac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpscc/por-ef/agriculture_agri-food/2024/054-23-e/POR054-23-report.pdf

[12] https://epe.bac-lac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpscc/por-ef/agriculture_agri-food/2024/054-23-e/POR054-23-report.pdf

By understanding these consumer archetypes and the vast amount of research utilized in developing “target market personas,” it allows the industry to better understand how to develop key messages, craft narratives and shape stories that speak directly to these consumers and provide the information they seek.

Five Recommended Target Audiences

According to those interviewed for this report, there are five recommended target audiences to consider:

1. Consumers

- 1st recommended audience: Millennials, women aged 35 to 45, family and job-focused
- 2nd recommended audience: Gen Z, men and women, aged 18 to 25, climate change focused
- 3rd recommended audience: Baby Boomer/Gen X, women, single, aged 50 to 65, health and wellness-focused
- Engagement example: Discuss what is important to them in their daily lives; their food values; the various ways they eat, share and experience food; focus on climate change and sustainability; food affordability; and social impact relating to topics such as diversity, equity and inclusion

2. Influencers

- 1st recommended audience: Agricultural influencers, most likely farmers who have built large communities of loyal followers doing what they love. They are seen as trusted leaders, and their opinions are highly valued by their communities
- 2nd recommended audience: Food influencers and mom bloggers. People who are trusted by their respective communities, either in food or as a mother who is tackling food-related topics for their children and families. They have large followings and potential for brand partnerships and influencer marketing opportunities
- 3rd recommended audience: Thought leaders or experts in the food system, including dietitians, doctors, chefs, marketing executives and lifestyle influencers who may not have a community directly connected to agriculture and agri-food, but are trusted and seen as an authority figure in their field

Consumer Segments Continued

Confident Critics (13%)

The fourth segment is the most challenging from the industry’s perspective but at 13% is the smallest. These are Canadians who can be considered Confident Critics. They think of themselves as knowledgeable about the industry and do not hold a favourable impression of it. While they do not all hold negative views, two-in-five of them do (38%), making them decidedly the most negative segment of society. While it is preferable to try to reduce the size of any segment with this combination of feelings, it is perhaps unrealistic to be completely bereft of critics. As a result, minimizing this segment should be the focus.

- Engagement examples: Paid influencer marketing opportunities, invitations to attend industry conferences/events, speaking opportunities, and serving on panels to better understand their perspective and why food is important to them

3. Agriculture and Food Leaders, Experts and Events

- 1st recommended audience: Key thought leaders and influencers in the public trust space in agriculture and agri-food in Canada
- 2nd recommended audience: Key leaders and decision makers within each commodity across the agriculture and agri-food industry
- 3rd recommended audience: Agriculture and agri-food professionals who are valuable in consumer engagement initiatives across the industry, including industry staff, food-related marketing-communications-public affairs professionals, government officials and post-secondary institution professionals
- Engagement examples: Events, media opportunities and ways to share Canada’s food system directly with consumers including [Canada’s Ag Day](#); [Food Day in Canada](#); [Canada Organic Month](#); [Taste of Canada awards event](#); [Calgary Stampede](#), [Canadian National Exhibition](#) and the [Royal Agricultural Winter Fair](#).

4. Government – Federal/Provincial/Municipal

- 1st recommended audience: Government staff, known as public servants, who are working in the public trust space
- 2nd recommended audience: Politicians and political staffers, municipally, provincially and federally, who can work with the industry to inform and influence current policy and regulations. This engagement would be mutually beneficial as officials would better understand industry challenges and could speak more informed about agriculture and agri-food to their constituents across Canada
- 3rd recommended audience: Policy makers, researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), not-for-profits (NFPs) and organizations within the government with whom the industry could convey economic benefits
- Engagement examples: Connecting with public servants by searching the [Government Electronic Directory Services \(GEDS\)](#) for federal employees; [INFO-GO in Ontario](#) for provincial employees as an example; reading and understanding mandate letters if ministers are given ministerial mandate letters; offering first-hand farm tours to elected officials and staff; and scheduling industry events to the parliamentary calendar in each province

5. Media

- 1st recommended audience: Key media outlets, TV shows, radio stations and podcast hosts across Canada
- 2nd recommended audience: Prominent journalists, publishers, TV producers and key contacts in mainstream media who cover topics of interest to Canadian consumers when it comes to food
- 3rd recommend audience: Develop pitches on food and agriculture that would be relevant to consumers, to pitch to producers and journalists on why consumers need to know about key topics relating to agriculture and agri-food and why they should ultimately care about these stories and conversations

Engagement examples: Follow journalists and producers on X (formerly known as Twitter) where their emails are typically provided; contact the producers of media outlets and TV shows to introduce industry spokespeople; proactively pitch story ideas and why it's relevant to the consumer (and have the spokesperson ready to pitch as guest examples)

Five Recommended Target Audiences

1. Consumers
2. Influencers
3. Agriculture and Food Leaders, Experts and Events
4. Government – Federal/Provincial/Municipal
5. Media



07. Techniques for Consumer Engagement

The goal of consumer engagement is to build long-term relationships in a scalable way. The opportunity to have a conversation with each consumer one-on-one is not possible, but there are techniques to make each person in a virtual or larger group setting feel like they are being talked to in a personalized way.

A solid first step is to gain a thorough understanding of example campaigns, resources and events that currently exist to foster consumer engagement, which are provided on page 25. The following techniques could be leveraged to strengthen consumer engagement efforts:

Seven Recommended Techniques for Consumer Engagement

1. Share by storytelling

- The industry often leads with facts and figures, but the best method to engage with Canadian consumers is through storytelling. Storytelling influences consumer behaviour by evoking emotions. More research proves that brands, businesses and organizations that story tell lead in consumer engagement
- Humanizing the people behind the practices and products of the industry and personalizing their stories and experiences in a way that relates to Canadian consumers and their values will build trust
- Storytelling would help to bridge science and technology and convey messages in a way that consumers want to hear and can understand
- To most effectively story tell, stakeholders should take consumers through what is known as "The Heroes Journey," which is a "common template in storytelling that involves a hero who goes on an adventure, is victorious in a decisive crisis and comes home changed or transformed. The ["Building a StoryBrand" 7-Part Framework](#) is a helpful communications resource to develop this

- The industry has all the right elements – trust, the people, the stories, the visuals – the industry should now connect with consumers in their food journeys to meet them where they are and share stories that relate to the questions consumers have on the mediums from which they source information

2. Lead with shared values

- CCFI research in 2016 showed that "confidence (shared values) is at least three times more important than competence (skill and expertise) in building consumer trust". "Of the three primary drivers of trust: confidence (shared values and ethics), competence (skills and ability) and influential others (family, friends and credentialed individuals) – confidence is most important in building trust." [13]
- Relating to the values of consumers to find commonality is key when building trust and engaging with consumers. The industry should find values it has in common with consumers and lead with these "shared values" when developing key messaging and stories
- Examples of shared values could include commitment, sustainability, environment and family. In 2016 CCFI research, data showed that "food affordability, health of Canadians, the safety of the food Canadians eat, the Canadian environment and the welfare of farm animals were the five principles of sustainable food and farming to Canadians." Addressing these concerns and leading with things in common will help to earn trust [14]
- Sustainability is an example of a shared value that could attract consumers to a story the industry wants to share. Share stories that speak to why this value is important to both the consumer and the industry in a way that is authentic, transparent and vulnerable

[13] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2016-Public-Trust-Research-Report.pdf>
[14] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2016-Public-Trust-Research-Report.pdf>

3. Catch them with a hook

- A narrative hook is a literary technique in the opening of a story that "hooks" the reader's attention so that they will keep on reading or watching
- Hooks can be a catchy headline for long-form content, opinion pieces or videos. Captivating social media captions can also draw consumer attention
- Consumers understand agriculture and agri-food topics at varying depths, so keep the target audience's reading level in mind and simplify as much as possible. Content tone is also important to ensure engagement with readers and viewers
- Ensure that headlines and hooks align with industry or organization integrity and are not considered fear-mongering clickbait

4. Showcase transparency wherever possible

- To build credibility where and when possible, the industry should lead with transparency. Canadian regulations and practices that govern the industry are why the industry can be so transparent
- The industry should share all aspects of production. The industry has its challenges and continually strives to be better at maintaining the integrity of food in Canada. It should share more about these areas of improvement, just as the industry shares its strengths
- Evidence-based facts reinforce that the industry is transparent. Showcasing research and data via assurance systems, regulations and voluntary policy can highlight what is being done to ensure food safety in Canada

5. Focus testing and workshopping key messages

- Where possible, group test key messages relating to topics of importance to consumers. The industry could look to partner on and share the outcome from focus groups to know how the industry can respond collectively in campaign efforts

- The industry should leverage and use fellow stakeholders and organizations as sounding boards on issues and topics of importance when developing key messages or campaigns
- Test message options to determine which message best delivers the call to action, sentiment or goal to the intended target audience(s). A/B testing, also known as split testing, is a good technique to try
- Communicating one-one-one through direct messages, email or telephone is always the best way to collect valuable information about topics that are important to consumers by simply asking them how they think and feel



6. Two-way dialogue is the ultimate goal

- Creating meaningful and beneficial two-way dialogue between the industry and consumers should always be the goal because it builds trust
- “Two-way communication is an exchange of information between two parties during which the speaker and receiver both feel they have an opportunity to share information and provide feedback” [15]
- One of the greatest lessons of communication to remember is to not speak to be heard but to listen to ask questions. The goal is to make consumers feel seen, heard and validated in their experience
- The industry should lead with the goal of productive two-way dialogue as it begins conversations with consumers, especially when covering controversial topics in agriculture and agri-food

7. Think of risk communication where/when applicable

- The industry should have a risk communication strategy and plan in place at all times
- Risk communication takes into consideration the current views, perceptions, beliefs and priorities of those involved
- It considers real and perceived risks, which typically includes being faced with three potential scenarios: precaution advocacy (risk is high, but outrage is low e.g., alerting calm people to serious hazard), crisis communications (risk is high and outrage is high e.g., food-borne illness outbreak) and outrage management (low-hazard, high-outrage e.g., regulated products used in agricultural production)
- Ensuring timeliness and transparency when/if one of these three scenarios occurs is critical. Have a plan, know how to properly execute it and think of risk communication at all times in consumer engagement efforts

- Several key issues that are of most concern to Canadian consumers when it comes to food, involve consumers perceiving they're at high risk despite science-based research that shows they are not a risk. These include issues such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and pesticides as examples. Consumers should be assured that government regulators identify and assess real risks where they exist, including developing ways to control those risks as needed.

Seven Recommended Techniques for Consumer Engagement

1. Share by storytelling
2. Lead with shared values
3. Catch them with a hook
4. Showcase transparency wherever possible
5. Focus testing and workshopping key messages
6. Two-way dialogue is the ultimate goal
7. Think of risk communication where/when applicable

[15] <https://www.yourthoughtpartner.com/blog/two-way-communication#:~:text=Two%2Dway%20communication%20is%20an,never%20just%20a%20leader%20monologue>

A Spotlight on Risk Communication

Risk communication is “an evidence-based approach to communicating effectively with the public in times of controversy.” [16] The World Health Organization (WHO) more specifically refers to it as “the real-time exchange of information, advice and opinions between experts or officials and people who face a hazard or threat to their survival, health, or economic or social wellbeing.” [17]

Risk communication has become a highly used technique in crisis management and communication, especially in the event of food-borne illness. However, it is applicable in outrage management — when risk hazard is low, and outrage is high — given there are many situations in which consumers perceive they are assuming a high risk despite science-based research to the contrary.[18]

It is important to be prepared for risk communication as consumers tend to feel concerned about issues like pesticides, GMOs, antibiotics and hormones. These topics make consumers feel they're at high risk with little benefit to them. Additional examples of consumer issues that require using risk communication techniques include the use of fertilizers, gene editing and cellular agriculture. If the industry does not acknowledge the real and perceived risks of these production practices, consumers may feel as though the industry is hiding something and they may become more distrustful of the food system.

To mitigate future risk, the industry can work with academic institutions and experts across Canada to better understand how to use risk communication and leverage attitudinal change.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), “the fundamental goal of risk communication is to provide meaningful, relevant and accurate information in clear and understandable terms targeted to a specific audience. It may not resolve all differences between parties but may lead to a better understanding of those differences. It may also lead to more widely understood and accepted risk management decisions.” [19]

The industry should be aware of the trends and topics that can pose a risk communications threat. An example is the [The Dirty Dozen](#) list released annually by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), which is typically featured by mainstream media outlets. Being prepared for the release of this list annually as an example, allows the industry to be aware of potentially heightened consumer fear and most importantly, be prepared with a proactive response.

To help better prepare in risk communication efforts, the following list by Vincent Covello and F. W. Allen created in 1988 outlines the “Seven Cardinal Rules of Risk Communication.” [20]

1. Accept and involve the public as a partner. Your goal is to produce an informed public, not to defuse public concerns or replace actions.
2. Plan carefully and evaluate your efforts. Different goals, audiences and media require different actions.
3. Listen to the public's specific concerns. People often care more about trust, credibility, competence, fairness and empathy than about statistics and details.
4. Be honest, frank, and open. Trust and credibility are difficult to obtain; once lost, they are almost impossible to regain.
5. Work with other credible sources. Conflicts and disagreements among organizations make communication with the public much more difficult.
6. Meet the needs of the media. The media are usually more interested in politics than risk, simplicity than complexity, danger than safety.
7. Speak clearly with compassion. Never let your efforts prevent your acknowledgment of the tragedy of an illness, injury, or death. People can understand risk information, but they may still not agree with you; some people will not be satisfied.

[16] <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/f/2016/fundamentals-risk-comm.pdf?la=en>

[17] <https://www.who.int/emergencies/risk-communications>

[18] <https://www.psandman.com/index-intro.htm>

[19] <https://www.fao.org/3/x1271e/x1271e.pdf>

[20] <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4613-1569-8>

08. Formats, Platforms and Mediums for Consumer Engagement

With a better understanding of how consumers behave and what techniques should be leveraged to engage with them, the next important step is deciding how to engage with consumers by choosing the best formats, platforms and mediums.

Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan was the first to coin the term “the medium is the message,” meaning the way the message is shared (the medium) can influence how the message is perceived by the intended target audience.

To lead with a consumer-centric mindset, the industry can think about how consumers are sourcing and consuming information throughout their day. Take into consideration how a consumer may think and feel and factor in where they may be on their food journey. These aspects help determine what formats are best to convey the narrative, stories and key messages the consumer wants to hear so the industry can choose the most valuable formats based on time, energy and budgeting dollars.

Based on research, experience and industry knowledge, these are 10 recommended formats, mediums and platforms to consider using to engage with consumers:

10 Recommended Formats, Mediums and Platforms to Leverage

1. Social media and digital marketing

- There should be a focus on more paid social media efforts, rather than organic, to reach more Canadian consumers
- Given the volume of content that exists, targeted messaging towards targeted audience(s) optimized for each platform should be used
- Improving Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques on websites across the industry is not only recommended, but necessary. Also, leveraging YouTube will be valuable

- Converting social media followers into email/newsletter subscribers will be key for digital marketing efforts moving forward. This conversion allows you to directly contact consumers through email, a medium they strongly trust. Develop strategies to push stories and information to consumers as they need and want information and invest in copywriting

2. Enhanced in-person engagement

- Use technology to expand audience reach by considering using robots and virtual chat functions that can help expand human resource capacities while at events with large crowds
- Provide training courses both in-person and online to best prepare people, volunteers and industry professionals who are volunteering/working at events
- Consider keeping in-person booths at events simple with compelling visuals, one main takeaway message and only a few handouts/resources for consumers. Providing consumers with too much information in such a short amount of time can leave people overwhelmed and disengaged

3. Classrooms (students/educators)

- Focus on elementary and high school curriculums with content that highlight agriculture and agri-food related careers
- For example, high school students could learn about the educational journey to careers in agriculture through their values and personal interests: i.e. problem solving and larger societal goals; food science; artificial intelligence (AI), robots, technology and digital skillsets; world issues and food insecurity, etc.
- A secondary focus could be vet and animal science graduates in post-secondary institutions without farm experience. These people are needed in the industry, as are culinary and dietician students
- Brainstorm new and innovative ways to virtually train more teachers and leverage current resources and expertise with organizations such as [Agriculture in the Classroom Canada \(AIRC-C\)](#)

4. Retail – grocery and restaurant

- Meet consumers where they shop and create powerful and meaningful experiences to deepen connections with them through product sampling and farmer meet-and-greets
- In addition, signage and resources at grocery stores, butcher shops and farmers markets can strike up conversations. First-hand interactions between farmers and consumers can create more meaningful relationships and opportunities for two-way dialogue
- Consider work to further the industry's relationship with major Canadian grocery retailers and outlets, fast food chains and restaurants by providing information and resources that help to answer their customers' questions
- Further work can be done to bolster assurance systems, provincial programs or industry campaigns that highlight the industry's work on the issues of importance to consumers (i.e. sustainability, environment, etc.)

5. Food and product labels

- Food labels are frustrating for many in part due to a lack of understanding—only 25% of consumers look for assurance logos and many don't know how to read a food label. The industry is collecting data to build awareness and more knowledge in this area
- A first step in the right direction would be documenting what food labels exist in the marketplace that the average Canadian may see on their food journey to increase awareness of logos and assurance systems
- Food packaging is a growing matter for the industry as there are limitations for some products (i.e. horticultural products sold loosely) and there are concerns about food packaging that the industry is being asked to address and should consider addressing proactively
- The industry could consider the use of a domestic logo, similar to what is being done in the United Kingdom with the Red Tractor logo



6. More one-on-one experiences with farmers

- On-farm experiences for consumers through farm tours, breakfast on the farm and open farm days are a powerful approach to show consumers what farms are really like
- Bringing more farm and agricultural experiences to the “consumer in the city” where they can conveniently access the event and feel more comfortable in their surroundings should be considered more, as driving out to a rural community may be difficult or inaccessible
- With nearly three in four Canadians (73.7%) living in one of Canada's large urban centres in 2021, ^[21] providing more virtual on-farm experiences to consumers may be an increasingly beneficial way to engage more Canadian consumers in the place that makes them feel most comfortable – in their own homes

7. Industry training

- The industry has focused heavily on media training. Many industry professionals and farmers may benefit from having training by experts in the following areas to further skillsets:
 - Consumer engagement/public trust
 - Public speaking and presenting – where to source information, messages, visuals and learn to properly present and story tell to audiences
 - Social media and digital marketing
 - Agri-tourism and on-farm experiences
 - Marketing and sales practices, both in-person and online
 - Innovation and technology
 - Issues management and risk communication
- Additionally, farmers may benefit from further industry training to be better prepared for experiences with consumers. The industry could offer training in communications, social media, managing protestors/activities and running on-farm tours. Additional information that may be useful can be found in the appendix including the glossary of terms, broad topics for awareness, further links and resources, etc.

8. Artificial intelligence and technology

- The industry should begin leveraging AI tools such as ChatGPT

- The industry should also leverage online technology, such as chatbots that can immediately address questions directly from consumers on industry websites
- Further consumer engagement efforts could include more technological-related efforts based on data and analytics including e-newsletters, online direct-to-consumer sales and QR codes

9. Diversified and creative collaborations outside the industry

- The industry could look at new collaborations and strategic relationships outside of the agriculture and agri-food industry that resonate with consumers and garner their attention
- Also, partnerships with more government and NGOs in agriculture and agri-food could be beneficial, such as the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#) and [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- The industry should also look at ways to be seen as a leader alongside other industries. For example, agriculture and agri-food experts can be invited as speakers, serve on panels and sponsor other events or conferences outside of agriculture and agri-food (i.e. business, leadership and/or digital marketing conferences, etc.)

10. Additional ways to engage with consumers

- The industry should leverage the human resource angle, the ‘people’ side of the industry to make agriculture and agri-food more attractive, so more people want to pursue careers in the industry
- The industry should look at sponsored ads on podcast streaming platforms such as Spotify or Apple and with well-known podcast hosts (both inside and outside of food and agriculture) to leverage exposure
- The industry should also look beyond TV as streaming services are becoming the go-to platform for consumers. Looking at placing advertisements on streaming platforms such as Amazon Prime, Crave, Disney+, and Netflix are on the rise
- The industry could also look at placing paid ads on radio/Sirius XM

[21] <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220209/dq220209b-eng.htm>

10 Recommended Formats, Mediums and Platforms to Leverage

1. Social media and digital marketing
2. Enhanced in-person engagement
3. Classrooms (students/educators)
4. Retail – grocery and restaurant
5. Food and product labels
6. More one-on-one experiences with farmers
7. Industry training
8. Artificial intelligence and technology
9. Diversified and creative collaborations outside the industry
10. Additional ways to engage with consumers

Five Recommended Spokespeople for the Industry

After determining which format(s) could be used to engage with consumers, another suggested step is determining the best spokespeople to represent the industry.

Canadian agriculture and agri-food stakeholders, including farmers, thought leaders, media personalities, influencers, industry professionals and academics have built loyal followings and trust with their communities. As a result, they can be active spokespeople for agriculture and agri-food in Canada. The industry should consider creating a list of the following spokespeople:

Farmers

- Identify farmers from across Canada in various commodities who can speak with consumers and media across different mediums, who have built their own online community of loyal fans and followers

Influencers

- Identify influencers who could be leveraged in storytelling the Canadian agriculture and agri-food story. These could include farming brands, industry

professionals, food influencers, food brands, chefs, mom influencers and podcast hosts

Health professionals

- Identify health-related professionals including nutritionists, dieticians, physicians, nurses, fitness experts, personal trainers and naturopaths who have a specific expertise or interest in speaking about food and its relationship to health and wellness

Food thought leaders

- Identify industry professionals – CEOs, board chairs, thought leaders, media personalities and professors – who are well-respected in their areas of expertise

Government Officials

- Identify respected public servants and government leaders, including regulators, policymakers, researchers, and those in market development across municipal, provincial and federal governments

These lists could include spokespeople who would be compelling, relevant and favourable to building public trust in agriculture and agri-food in Canada. Other examples include members from the [Canadian Agricultural Youth Council](#), the [Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council](#) and the [Consumer Demands and Market Trends Table](#) who could be leveraged. Ideally, spokespeople who have a social media following or influencer-type presence online will find this engagement to be mutually beneficial whereby the industry benefits from more views while the influencer grows their online presence.

Five Recommended Spokespeople for the Industry

1. Farmers
2. Influencers
3. Health professionals
4. Food thought leaders
5. Government officials

09. Examples of Consumer Engagement Efforts

The industry is doing an excellent job of developing effective ways to engage with consumers in person and online through campaigns, resources and events. To capture the number of industry initiatives, campaigns, resources, events in agriculture and agri-food, CCFI conducted an audit in 2022 entitled, "[Audit Report of Canadian Agriculture and Food Marketing & Communications Initiatives 2022.](#)"

This audit "lists the current marketing and communications initiatives that exist, aimed from industry/sector (agriculture-food) to Canadian consumers, that are the touchpoints for Canadian consumers to receive information about agriculture/farming and food."^[22] It valuably captures all that is taking place within the industry for stakeholders to learn from and leverage.

To learn from each other's efforts in how to build effective campaigns and resources that speak to what Canadian consumers want to hear and in the way it should be delivered, the following list was created with 15 examples from across the value chain. This is only a sample list, as there are more valuable examples that can be found in the appendix under "Consumer Engagement Examples."

Consumer Engagement Examples

- [Raised by a Canadian Farmer, Chicken Farmers of Canada](#)
 - [Real Farm Lives](#)
 - [Taste the Commitment, Government of Canada](#)
- [Canada Beef](#)
 - [Canadian Food Focus](#)
 - [Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#)
 - [Choose Canada Organic](#)
 - [Net Zero by 2050, Dairy Farmers of Canada](#)
 - [Eggs for Dinner, Egg Farmers of Canada](#)
 - [Food Day Canada](#)
 - [Farm Food 360 Virtual Farm Tours](#)
 - [Hello Canola, Alberta Canola, SaskCanola and Manitoba Canola Growers](#)
 - ['Not Without Canadian Farmers' Campaign, McDonald's Canada](#)
 - [Nature Nurtured](#)
 - [President's Choice 'Free From' Campaign, Loblaws](#)

These are examples to learn from for what other industry organizations are doing to create and execute strategic, compelling, engaging and effective campaigns for consumers. This list provides examples that are leading-edge, speak to the needs of consumers and what is of importance to them, provide information in visually compelling and different ways than are traditionally done by the industry, and most importantly, are trusted by consumers for information when it comes to their food. These campaigns and resources all highlight three important elements of an effective campaign: branding, the unique selling point (USP) and the medium.



[22] <https://www.foodintegrity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Audit-Report-CCFI-2022-v3-FINAL.pdf>
Photo courtesy of [FarmPhotos.ca](#)

10. Next Steps

This document focuses on best practices for consumer engagement to help the industry learn how to best communicate. The Consumer Demand and Market Trends Table's next initiative will focus on developing a unified consumer engagement plan (i.e., what to communicate). It will again be supported by its Consumer Engagement Working Group.

Long term, the table's strategic plan includes five initiatives to be supported by the Consumer Engagement Working Group:

- Developing best practices for consumer engagement
- Developing a unified consumer engagement plan
- Encouraging consumer acceptance of forecasted innovation and technology
- Providing the consumer perspective in terms of establishing assurance systems
- Providing the consumer perspective in terms of advancing assurance systems

The last two initiatives are paused until completion of the National Index on Agri-Food Performance.

Developing Key Messaging

One of the next steps that will be based on the best practices described within this document will be the development of key messages for each consumer issue to be used by the industry.

A broad list of "Consumer Issues for Use in Consumer Engagement" can be found in the appendix. The plan is to create an evergreen set of key messages based on these issues that will be readily available for industry to use to engage with consumers to ensure that—regardless of the spokesperson—the key messages are consistent, informative, convincing and help to build trust.

Developing consistent key messages also requires a communal glossary of terms with language that is clear and concise. This has been created and provided in the appendix listed as "Glossary of Terms."

Measuring Success with Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking

The industry should establish ways to measure the success of consumer engagement efforts with the creation of collective goals. The next project's priority will be to create and measure a standard list of KPIs and benchmarking metrics to compare efforts year over year.

For example, these measurements could include the number of positive stories about agriculture and agri-food, the frequency of crisis management and negative responses to agriculture and agri-food-related topics, views on industry websites, views on campaign videos, and digital and social media impressions.

The industry can build upon the solid foundation of existing research and benchmarking efforts already provided through CCFI and AAFC data.



Written by Crowley + Arklie Strategy & Co.



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada



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Appendix

Best Practices for Consumer Engagement
in Agriculture and Agri-Food

2024

Table of Contents

The following Appendix has been compiled with tools, campaign examples, research reports, relevant research links, and historical resources/documents that are available to be used and/or are currently being used by stakeholders across the industry. Many may find these helpful and useful in consumer engagement efforts to be used for historical purposes, context or when needing more information.

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Tools for Consumer Engagement

Agriculture-Food Facts and Figures Examples

- [2021 Census of Agriculture](#), Statistics Canada
- [Best Food Facts](#)
- [Canadian Agriculture at a Glance](#), Statistics Canada
- [Canadian Grocer](#)
- [Half Your Plate](#)
- [Overview of Canada's Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector](#), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- [Restaurants Canada Food Service Facts 2023](#)

Assurance System Examples

- [Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#)
- [Dairy Farmers of Canada's proAction©](#)
- [Egg Farmers of Canada Egg Quality Assurance™ \(EQA®\)](#)
- [Turkey Farmers of Canada On-Farm Food Safety Program©](#)

Additional Consumer Engagement Examples

- [Agriculture Works](#), BioEnterprise Canada
- [Buy BC](#), Government of BC
- [Buy Local New Brunswick](#), Government of New Brunswick
- ['Canada Brand'](#), Government of Canada
- [Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef](#), Canadian Beef Producer Associations, Beef Processors and Associations, Retail & Food Service Sector, Non-governmental Organizations, Agriculture & Food Businesses, Academic Institutions
- [Cage Free Eggs](#), Egg Farmers of Canada
- [Choose Canadian Seafood](#), Fisheries Council of Canada and Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance
- [Eat Local NB](#), Government of New Brunswick
- [Everybody Milk Campaigns](#), Dairy Farmers of Ontario
- [Faces Behind Food](#), Farm and Food Care Ontario
- [Faces of PEI Food](#), Farm and Food Care PEI
- [Farm Photos](#), Farm and Food Care
- [Foodland Ontario](#), Government of Ontario
- [Federated Cooperative Limited](#)
- [Flat Out Food Series](#)
- [Get Cracking](#), Egg Farmers of Canada
- [Half Your Plate](#)
- [Helping Canada Grow](#), CropLife
- [It's Good Canada](#), Canadian Centre for Food Integrity
- [Lentils.org](#), Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

- [Let's Talk Chicken](#), Chicken Farmers of Canada
- [More Than a Migrant Worker](#), Ontario agricultural organizations
- [Ontario Beef](#), Beef Farmers of Ontario
- [Produce Made Simple](#), Ontario Produce Marketing Association
- [PEI potatoes](#), Prince Edward Island Potato Board
- [Road to 2050](#), Grain Growers of Canada
- [Savour Ontario](#), Dairy Farmers of Ontario
- [What You Eat](#), Dairy Farmers of Canada
- [Understanding Eggs and Cholesterol](#), Egg Farmers of Canada

*A fulsome "Audit Report of Canadian Agriculture and Food Marketing & Communications Initiatives" was done by the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity in 2022 which can be [found here](#).

Agriculture and Food Event Examples

- [Alberta Open Farm Days](#)
- [Breakfast on the Farm](#), Farm and Food Care Ontario
- [Canada's Agriculture Day](#), [Agriculture More Than Ever](#), Canadian Centre for Food Integrity
- [Food Day Canada](#)
- [Interactive 'Ask a Farmer' kiosk](#) from Farm and Food Care Ontario
- [Saskatchewan Open Farm Days](#)

Documentary Examples from Industry

- [Before the Plate Documentary 2020](#)
- [Beyond the Plate Documentary](#)
- [License to Farm Documentary 2016](#)
- [Guardians of the Grassland Documentary](#)

Evergreen List of Consumer Concern Issues to be Aware of in Consumer Engagement

- Alternative proteins (e.g., plant-based)
- Animal welfare
- Antibiotics in livestock
- Artificial intelligence
- Assurance systems for product claims (including certification, inspection, and traceability)
- Cellular agriculture (e.g., lab cultured meats)
- Economic sustainability
 - Business and profits along entire value chain
- Environmental sustainability
 - Carbon footprint; carbon neutral; net neutral; carbon tax; and carbon Sequestration
 - Greenhouse gas emissions
 - Environmental stewardship

- Climate change (including adaptation)
- Greenwashing
- Regenerative agriculture
- Food packaging
- Circular Economy
- Including need for economic and social sustainability
- Farmland preservation
- Farm size: Family vs Corporate farms vs Factory vs Industrial
- Fertilizers
- Food affordability; price of food; and the Grocery Code of Conduct
- Food labels (including misleading labels; food fraud; and creating meaningful labels)
- Food safety; food-borne illness; and regular inspections (including assurance systems)
- Food security; food insecurity
- Food waste and loss
- Genome editing (or gene editing); including regulations
- Genetically modified organisms (GMOS); agricultural biotechnology; including regulations
- Globalization of food and Canada's role in feeding the world (world trade and food)
- Growth hormones
- Livestock transportation
- Local food
- Nutrition of food (including gluten)
- Organic
- Pesticides (e.g., including glyphosate and bee health)
- Social sustainability
 - Women in agriculture
 - Mental health in agriculture
- Technology and innovation (beyond GMOs/gene editing like automation and plant breeding)

Additional General Perceptions Influencing Perceptions on Consumer Issues

- Careers within agriculture and agri-food and its contribution towards the broader economy
- Personification of animals
- Private investment towards innovation
- Differences in trust between large versus small companies
- Profitability within the sector
- Sustainability

Glossary of Terms

To have the industry work in a coordinated and collaborative way, it would be constructive to be familiar with both words that Canadian consumers are hearing and accustomed to hearing, and also be consistent in the use of the definition of these words when engaging with consumers about the industry. These terms to describe each word, need to be explained in a concise and clear way that that allows the consumer to best understand.

This is what has been done with the following Glossary of Terms, that the industry can use when engaging with consumers. This list does not include all terms associated with agriculture and agri-food, but highlights the words of most importance and relevancy to Canadian consumers at the current moment.

- 3D-printed foods: Use of 3D printing technology to create food in unique shapes or structures by turning traditional food items into a consistency suitable for printing. Examples include: intricate chocolate sculptures, personalized pasta shapes, and meat substitutes meant to mimic the texture and flavor of animal-based proteins.
- Agriculture - The science, art and practice of cultivating soil to grow crops and raise livestock to market. From Latin agricultura, from ager, agr- 'field' + cultura 'growing, cultivation.'
- Agricultural biotechnology - a range of tools, including traditional breeding techniques, that alter living organisms, or parts of organisms, to make or modify products; improve plants or animals; or develop microorganisms for specific agricultural uses.
- Agri-Food - Description for the food system and related businesses, combining the production of agriculture and food.
- Alternative proteins – plant-based and food-technology alternatives to animal protein. They include food products made from plants (for example, grains, legumes and nuts), fungus (mushrooms), algae, insects and even cultured (lab-grown) meat.
- Animal welfare – ensuring the well-being of animals.
- Antibiotic residue-free - Antibiotics have been administered to these chickens but are removed from their feed a few days before they are slaughtered, so that there is no residue left in the meat when it is processed.
- Cage-free - refers to farm environments where chickens who produce eggs—known as laying hens (or layer hens)—live in open indoor spaces but not in cages.
- Carbon Tax - A fee imposed on carbon-emitting activities.
- Carbon Sequestration- Long-term storage of carbon dioxide to prevent further global warming and accumulation of greenhouse gases.
- Carbon Footprint - the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by a person or entity (for example, business, organization, etc).
- Canada's Food System - The production, processing, distribution, transportation and consumption of Canadian food, including supply chains and retail.
- Cellular agriculture - an emerging technology in the production of food usually derived from animals (meat, seafood, eggs, milk products) using cell culture methods instead of live animals. This can also be referred to as: lab-grown foods. cell-based foods. cell-cultured foods.
- Conventional Farming/Agriculture - A method of farming that focuses on growing crops and animals for profit with farm practices that are characterized by rapid technological innovation, large capital investments in equipment and modern technology.
- Climate change - Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.
- Country foods - traditional foods that are hunted, fished and gathered from the land.
- Dairy-free - a food or beverage that does not contain an ingredient derived from any component of mammal milk is considered to be dairy-free.
- Environmental stewardship - a person or an organization's responsibility to care for land and possessions entrusted to them.
- Factory Farm - A derogatory term coined by critics to describe large farms.
- Family farm - Ownership of a farm by family members that may or may not be incorporated. Over 97% of farms in Canada are family-owned.
- Farmer – A person engaged in agriculture, raising livestock or growing crops. Also known as 'producers' or 'food producers.'
- Fertilizer
 - Green fertilizer – Nitrate-based mineral fertilizers with exactly the same chemical and physical composition as fertilizers produced with fossil sources (natural gas, coal, oil), but with a much lower carbon footprint because they are produced with renewable electricity (hydro, wind, solar).

- Organic fertilizers – also known as organic inputs, they are mined from the ground, like soaps, sulfur or hydrogen peroxide.
- Synthetic fertilizers - also known as conventional fertilizers, they're created from natural sources of nutrients such as like ammonium nitrate, ammonium phosphate, and potassium sulphate using manufactured processes.
- Food affordability - is the ratio of food price to wage.
- Food fraud - takes place when food or food labeling is substituted, tampered or misrepresented for economic gain.
- Food insecurity - is the availability of food in a country and the ability of individuals within that country to access, afford, and source adequate foodstuff.
- Food loss - refers to food or food ingredients that are removed from the food supply at the upstream stages of the supply chain (production, processing, distribution and transportation)
- Food packaging - encloses food to protect it from environmental factors that may cause contamination, damage or decay in the process of transport, storage or selling.
- Food processing - the transformation of raw agricultural products that alters their natural state, and/or makes them fit for consumption.
- Food regulation - Food in Canada must comply with various regulations to ensure health and safety. Legislation for food in Canada includes the Food and Drugs Act (FDA), Safe Food for Canadians Act, Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, and more, depending on the nature of the food. The primary legislation for food in Canada is the Food and Drugs Act (FDA).
- Food safety – the handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent foodborne illness and contamination.
- Food security (insecurity) - is the availability of food in a country and the ability of individuals within that country to access, afford, and source adequate foodstuff. The four main dimensions of food security are physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization and the stability of the other three dimensions over time.
- Food traceability - tracking the movement of food in the supply chain. For example, being able to trace a piece of meat back to the farm it came from.
- Food waste – refers to food and food ingredients that become spoiled, diverted, discarded, or otherwise removed from the food supply chain. It occurs at the downstream stages of the supply chain (i.e., retail, food service, institutions and households)
- Free Range - where animals or birds have access to outside.
- Free Run – a type of barn that animals or birds can move around in to get feed, water and lay eggs, but they do not go outside.
- Functional Food - food products fortified with special ingredients that may provide additional health benefits.
- Genetically Modified Organism - GMO (short for “genetically modified organism”) is a plant, animal or microbe in which one or more changes have been made to the genome using precise plant breeding methods, typically in a way that would not occur in traditional plant breeding and/or using DNA from outside of the plant, in an attempt to improve the organism.
- Genome editing (or gene editing) - is a plant breeding tool used to make precise changes to the existing DNA of an organism typically without introducing DNA from outside of the plant.
- Glyphosate - is a widely used herbicide that can control a broad spectrum of weeds inhibiting an enzyme essential for plant growth. The product is used primarily in agriculture, but also in forestry and lawn and garden care.
- Grasslands – an area in which the vegetation is dominated by a nearly continuous cover of grasses. Grasslands occur in environments conducive to the growth of this plant cover but not to that of taller plants, particularly trees and shrubs.

- Greenwashing - when an organization spends significantly more resources on advertising being "green" than on environmentally sound practices.
- Grocery Code of Conduct – A code being developed by the Grocery Industry Code of Conduct Steering Committee to support fairness and transparency in the grocery sector and to create a hub of information allowing Canadians better access to the prices of food.
- Gluten - is a protein found in the wheat plant and some other grains such as barley and rye.
- Halal – is an Arabic word meaning 'permissible' that refers to the foods that are fit for Muslim consumption. Halal products must be made, produced, manufactured, processed, and stored using machinery, equipment, and/or utensils that have been cleaned according to Islamic law (shariah). For meat to be certified halal, it must be slaughtered in a manner known as dhabihah.
- Health and wellness - Health is the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease, or infirmity. Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.
- Hormone-free- the animal received no artificial hormones in its span of life. Labels such as "raised without added hormones," "no hormones administered," or "no synthetic hormones" refer to this.
- Kosher – is a Hebrew word meaning "fit" that is divided into three categories: Meat, dairy, and pareve. Kosher meat must come from an animal that chews its cud and has split hooves. (Cows, sheep, and goats are kosher; rabbits are not).
- Local Food – focuses on the distribution part of the supply chain which includes shorter distances between the farmer and the food buyer and where the food is consumed. It can be defined by region, province or country.
- Non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) - a product that was produced with the intent to avoid genetic engineering during its production and in sourcing ingredients.
- Nutrition - Nutrition is the biochemical and physiological process by which an organism uses food to support its life.
- Organic – food, feed, seed or farming methods produced or involving production methods adhering to the Canadian Organic Standards 32.310, 32.311 and 32.312 prohibiting the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, genetic engineering or other artificial agents. The claim organic is regulated and enforced by the CFIA.
- Organic farming – a type of farming that follows standards with a preference toward avoiding man-made fertilizers or man-made pesticides.
- Organic food - food produced in accordance with the Canadian organic standards or equivalent standards that Canada has signed an equivalency arrangement with.
- Organic matter - Comes from animals or plants and their waste, very helpful for soil health. Examples would be manure or corn stalks.
- Pasture-raised - Animals who have been raised on mostly grasses. There is no standard around this definition.
- Pesticides – is any product, device, organism, substance or thing that is manufactured, represented, sold or used as a means for directly or indirectly controlling, preventing, destroying, mitigating, attracting or repelling any pest.
- Plant-based – food or diet, consisting largely or solely of vegetables, grains, pulses, or other foods derived from plants, rather than animal products.
- Precision Agriculture -. also known as precision ag or precision farming), is a science that uses different technology tools along with data collection and interpretation, to make farming more efficient and effective.
- Primary Production - Growing, cultivating, picking, harvesting, collecting or catching food
- Production systems and practices – the activities and practices that farmers undertake during the cultivation of soil to grow crops and raise livestock to market.
- Regenerative agriculture – an outcome-based approach to food production that focuses on maintaining healthy soils and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems.

- Soil health - The overall quality of soil to support plant growth, animals and humans.
- Supply management - abbreviated SM, is a national agricultural policy framework used across Canada since 1972, which controls the supply of dairy, poultry and eggs through production and import controls and pricing mechanisms. The five national supply management organizations, also known as the 'SM-5' are Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC), Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC), Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC), the Canadian Hatching Egg Producers (CHEP) and the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC).
- Sustainability - farming in ways that meet society's present food needs, without compromising the ability for current or future generations to meet their needs while integrating social, environmental, and economic interests. The goals of sustainable agriculture are; to help provide enough food, fuel, feed and fiber for everyone, bring communities out of poverty and provide an enhanced quality of life for farming families, and utilize farming methods that promote soil health and support environmental sustainability.
- Sustainable agriculture – farming in ways that meet society's present food needs, without compromising the ability of current or future generations to meet their needs while integrating social, environmental, and economic interests. The goals of sustainable agriculture are; to help provide enough food for everyone, bring communities out of poverty and provide an enhanced quality of life for farming families, and utilize farming methods that promote soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels for environmental sustainability.
- Types of diets
 - 100-mile - only eat foods that are grown or produced within a 100-mile radius of your home.
 - Carnivore - only eat animal-based products — meat, cheese, milk, animal-based fats, and eggs (though some variations only allow meat, no eggs, and dairy). There are no grains, no vegetables, and no fruits.
 - Climatarian - the healthy, climate-friendly, nature-friendly diet; people who campaign to stop global warming by changing their eating habits which emphasizes reducing intake of animal products — particularly red meat — and opting for more of a plant-based eating pattern.
 - Dukan - high-protein, low-carb weight loss diet split into four phases — two weight loss phases and two maintenance phases.
 - Flexitarian - includes a variety of whole, plant-based foods with an emphasis on plant over animal proteins. When including animal products, consider choosing free-range eggs, wild-caught fish, and grass-fed meat and dairy when possible.
 - Gluten-Free - excludes any foods that contain gluten, which is a protein found in wheat and several other grains. It means eating only whole foods that don't contain gluten, such as fruits, vegetables, meat and eggs, as well as processed gluten-free foods like gluten-free bread or pasta.
 - Intermittent Fasting - cycles your body between periods of fasting and eating. Rather than restricting the foods you eat, it controls when you eat them. Thus, it can be seen as more of an eating pattern than a diet.
 - Ketogenic (Keto) - reduces total carbohydrate intake to less than 50 grams a day—less than the amount found in a medium plain bagel—and can be as low as 20 grams a day. Generally, popular ketogenic resources suggest an average of 70-80% fat from total daily calories, 5-10% carbohydrate, and 10-20% protein. Many versions of ketogenic diets exist, but all ban carb-rich foods.
 - Mediterranean - inspired by the eating habits of people who live near the Mediterranean Sea, including lots of healthy foods like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, seafood, beans, and nuts.
 - Paleo - eat the same foods that your hunter-gatherer ancestors ate before agriculture developed.
 - Pescetarian - someone who adds fish and seafood to a vegetarian diet. Some pescatarians may eat eggs and dairy, while others may not. There are many reasons people choose to forgo red meat and poultry, but still eat fish.
 - Omnivore – eat both plants and animal products.
 - Vegan - restricts all animal products for ethical, environmental, or health reasons.
 - Vegetarian- involves abstaining from eating meat, fish, and poultry.

- Urban agriculture - Growing or raising food at a small scale in a city.
- Vertical Farming - is the practice of growing plants in vertically stacked layers.

An inclusive and comprehensive Glossary of Terms for the agriculture and food sector does not exist all in one place, but there are various Glossary of Terms across our sector to reference, which include:

- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Glossary of terms in soil science](#)
- [Canada's Food Guide - Canada's Dietary Guidelines](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Safe Food for Canadians Regulations: Glossary of key terms](#)
- [Farm and Food Care Ontario](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations Terminology Portal](#)
- Statistics Canada archived
- [Utensil](#)

Influencer Examples from the Industry

- Andrew Campbell, ON [@freshairfarmer](#)
- Emily De Sousa, ON [@seasidewithEmily](#)
- Farmer Tim, ON [@MayhavenFarms](#)
- Gabby's Farm, ON [Gabby's Farm on TVO](#)
- Laurel Ysebaert, ON [@laurelysebaert](#)
- Lesley Kelly, SK [@highheelsandcanolafields](#)
- Learning About Ag With Mady, SK [@learnaboutagwithmaddy](#)
- Sask Dutch Kid, SK [@saskdutchkid](#)
- Sheepishly Me, Sandi Brock, ON [@SandiBrock](#)
- Tyler Heppel, Potato Ty, BC [@heppellspotato](#)

*If you'd like additional examples of influencers within the agriculture and agri-food industry, please contact the Industry Engagement Division, AAFC at aafc.roundtable-table ronde.aac@agr.gc.ca.

Organizations Involved in Agriculture Storytelling and Public Trust in Canada

- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)
- [Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [Agriculture for Life](#)
- [AgScape](#)
- [Farm and Food Care – Saskatchewan, Ontario and Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Canadian Food Focus](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Food Integrity](#)
- [FeastON, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance](#)
- [Love Food Hate Waste](#)
- [Culinary Tourism Alliance](#)
- [Unlock Food, Dieticians of Canada](#)

Outrage Factors Influencing Perceptions of Risk-Based Consumer Issues

- Benefits (consumer versus sector) *
- Voluntariness *
- Familiarity *
- Human vs. natural origin *
- Effects on children *
- Effects on future generations *
- Uncertainty (e.g., yet-to-be identified risk) *
- Controllability
- Fairness
- Catastrophic
- Understanding of risk by the science community
- Victim identity (e.g., specific person or statistics reported only)
- Dread
- Media attention
- Reversibility
- Ethical/moral nature
- Trust

* outrage factors commonly involved with risk-based issues in agriculture and agri-food

Podcast Examples

- [Agriculture for Life Podcast](#)
- [Ask a Farmer, Canadian Food Focus](#)
- [Food Focus Guelph Podcast](#)
- [The Diversity Imperative](#)
- [The First Sixteen, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)
- [The Stew Podcast, It's Good Canada](#), Canadian Centre for Food Integrity
- [The Rural Woman Podcast](#)

Educational Tools for Agriculture and Agri-Food Industry

Course/ Training/Advocacy/Education Examples

- [Agriculture in the Classroom Curriculum Linked Resources](#)
- [Ag Ambassador Resources](#), Farm and Food Care Ontario
- [Canadian Food Focus Courses](#)
- [Farming 101 Courses](#), Farm and Food Care Saskatchewan
- [Food Literacy and Nutrition](#), Second Harvest
- [Real Dirt on Farming Educator's Guide](#), Farm and Food Care Ontario
- Speak Up Training, Farm and Food Care [Ontario](#) and [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Teacher Ambassador Program](#), AgScape
- [Virtual Food & Farm Field Trips](#), Farm and Food Care Ontario
- [Virtual Field Trips](#), AgScape

Educational Institutions in Agriculture and Agri-Food Across Canada

- [Anita Stewart Memorial Food Laboratory](#), University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario
- [Arrell Food Institute](#), University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario
- [Conestoga College](#), Kitchener, Ontario
- [Dalhousie University](#), Halifax, Nova Scotia
- [George Brown Chef School](#), Toronto, Ontario
- [Lakeland College](#), Vermilion, Alberta
- [Laval University](#), Quebec, Quebec
- [McGill University](#), Montreal, Quebec
- [Niagara College School of Culinary Arts](#), Niagara, Ontario
- [Olds College](#), Olds, Alberta
- [The Barrett Centre, Durham College](#), Whitby, Ontario
- [University of Alberta](#), Edmonton, Alberta
- [The University of British Columbia](#), Kelowna, BC
- [The University of Calgary](#), Calgary, Alberta
- [University of Guelph](#), Guelph, Ontario
- [University of Guelph Ridgetown College](#), Ridgetown, Ontario
- [University of Manitoba](#), Winnipeg, MB
- [University of Saskatchewan](#), Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- [University of Victoria](#), Victoria, BC

Valuable Research Reports and Resources

Examples of Research, Reports and Resources to Help with Consumer Engagement in Canada

- [Agriculture is Always in Season Colouring Food, Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#)
- [AgScape Youth Impact Report](#)
- [Canadian Agri-Food Human Resources Council 'Sowing Seeds of Change' Agriculture Labour Market Force 2023-2030 Report](#)
- [Canada's National Index on Agri-Food Performance](#)
- [Canadian Agri-Food Sustainability, 2023](#)
- [Canadian Food Price Report](#)
- [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)
- [Canadian Grocer 'The Fresh' Report 2023](#)
- [Edelman Canada Trust Barometer Report](#)
- [Farm Fresh Ontario Map](#)
- [Farming the Future: Agriculture and climate change on the Canadian Prairies](#)
- [Food Banks of Canada Poverty Index](#)
- [Food Safety, Government of Canada](#)
- [Local Food Act, Ontario](#)
- [Manitoba Agriculture and Food Knowledge Exchange](#)
- [Nourish Marketing Food Trend Report;](#)
- [Ontario Federation of Agriculture Where Local Lives](#)
- [Second Harvest's Food Waste Research](#)
- [Statistics Canada Food Price Data Hub](#)
- [The Rise of Food Tourism, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance](#)
- [Top 5 Food Trends for 2024: A new year promises a food revolution driven by tech, sustainability, bold new tastes](#)
- [Unlock Food](#)
- [2024 Global Food and Drink Trends, Mintel](#)
- [4-H Canada Food for Thought Activity Book](#)
- [Top 5 Food Trends for 2024: A new year promises a food revolution driven by tech, sustainability, bold new tastes](#)

Examples of Research and Resources from Industry on Public Trust

- [Advanced Symbolics – AI Polling on Public Trust – Kenton White](#)
- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Strategic Plan for Science](#)
- [Alberta Ministry of Agriculture - Public trust in agriculture](#)
- [Best Practices Communication - Robert Mensies & Brent Smith, 6P Marketing](#)
- [Best Practices Issues Management - Ellen Goddard, University of Alberta](#)
- [Canadian Journey to Social License Public Trust](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Food Integrity's Public Trust Research Report, 2023](#)
- [Cereals Canada - Public Trust and Celebrating Modern Agriculture](#)
- [Farmers Trust Survey, Agri-Food Analytics Labs, Dalhousie University](#)

- [House of Commons – Perception and Public Trust in the Canadian Agricultural Sector](#)
- [Perception of and Public Trust in the Canadian Agriculture Sector, Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions](#)
- [Perception of and Public Trust in the Canadian Agriculture Sector Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food April 2019](#)
- [Public Trust in Agriculture and Food: Literature and Case Studies](#)
- [Public Trust in Agriculture and Food: Literature and Case Studies Prepared for the Public Trust Steering Committee and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#)
- [RealAgristudies Canadian Farmer Sentiment Index](#)
- [Resiliency and Public Trust: Food Safety & Traceability, Government of Manitoba](#)
- [Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture - Building Public Trust in Agriculture](#)
- [Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture - Public Trust in Agriculture](#)
- [Strategy for Earning Public Trust in Food and Farming in Nova Scotia – Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture](#)
- [“Trust us, we feed this to our kids”: women and public trust in the Canadian agri-food system](#)

Examples of International Work and Thought Leaders on Public Trust

- [Cause Matters – Michele Payn](#)
- [Consumer behavior as a leverage point in the food system, World Wildlife Fund Netherlands](#)
- [Consumers want sustainable options. What food producers, suppliers, and retailers can do now, World Economic Forum](#)
- [Elements of public trust in the American food system: Experts, organizations, and genetically modified food](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: The future of food and agriculture – Trends and Challenges](#)
- [Identifying public trust building priorities of gene editing in agriculture and food](#)
- [International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability](#)
- [Public Knowledge and Trust of Agricultural and Natural Resources Organizations](#)
- [Red Tractor Campaign, England](#)
- [Research: What is trust?: perspectives from farmers and other experts in the field of agriculture in Africa](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture From Common Principles to Common Practice, Switzerland](#)
- [Sustainable agriculture and food systems, Chatham House, London](#)
- [The Center for Food Integrity](#)
- [The evolutionary transformation of modern agri-food systems: emerging trends in consumption, production, and in the provision of public goods](#)
- [The Future Challenges of Food and Agriculture: An Integrated Analysis of Trends and Solutions](#)
- [University of Minnesota Bridging the food trust gap](#)
- [Values, trust, and management in New Zealand agriculture](#)
- [Values, trust and science – building trust in today's food system in an era of radical transparency](#)
- [Whole Foods Market Forecasts Top 10 Food Trends for 2024](#)
- [Who Does the Public Trust? The Case of Genetically Modified Food in the United States](#)

Examples of Research and Resources on Consumer Behaviour

- [AAFC 2020 Buy Canadian Promotion Campaign Baseline Survey, Earncliffe Strategy Group](#)
- [AAFC 2021 Canadian Agri-Awareness Initiative Qualitative Research, Earncliffe Strategy Group](#)
- [AAFC 2021-22 Consumer Attitudes Towards Innovative Agricultural Technologies Survey and Focus Groups, Quorus Consulting Group Inc.](#)
- [AAFC 2022 Qualitative Research on Consumer and Producer Views Towards Sustainability in Agriculture, Earncliffe Strategy Group](#)
- [2022-23 Qualitative Research on Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability-Oriented Food Assurance Systems, Earncliffe Strategy Group](#)
- [AAFC Consumer trends and behaviours towards Canadian agriculture and agri-foods](#)
- [AAFC Industry Implications of Evolving Consumer Behaviour Research – Earncliffe Strategy Group](#)
- [Abacus Data: 9 in 10 Canadians Say It's Important to Them that the Dairy, Eggs, Chicken and Turkey They Buy Come From Canada](#)
- [Building a bridge between civic agriculture and civic engagement: farmers' markets as communication infrastructure](#)
- [Consumer attitudes and behaviors toward more sustainable diets: a scoping review](#)
- [Consumers' perceptions and preferences for local food: A review](#)
- [Dalhousie University Agri-Food Analytics Lab](#)
- [Edelman Trust Barometer, Canada Report, 2024](#)
- [How do we earn trust in Food and Farming with Canadian Consumers?](#)
- [Impact of communication on consumers' food choices](#)
- [Misinformation and Disinformation in Food Science and Nutrition: Impact on Practice](#)
- [Moving from risk communication to food information communication and consumer engagement](#)
- [Nourish Food Trend Marketing Report 2024](#)
- [Ontario Produce Marketing Association's Research Report with Numerator](#)
- [The value of Canadian agriculture: Direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts](#)
- [Understanding Food Labels, Harvard University](#)
- [Values, trust and science – building trust in today's food system in an era of radical transparency - 2016](#)

Examples of Research and Resources on Risk Communication

- [A Systematic Review of the Use of Social Media for Food Safety Risk Communication](#)
- [Consumer perceptions of best practice in food risk communication and management: Implications for risk analysis policy.](#)
- [Food preparation, risk communication and the consumer](#)
- [Risk/Benefit Communication about Food—A Systematic Review of the Literature](#)
- [Risk Communications, Health Canada](#)
- [Risk Communication Thought Leader, Peter Sandman](#)

Examples of Sustainability Reports from Industry in Canada

- [Benchmarking Canada's Agri-Food Sustainability Leadership](#)
- [BioEnterprise Sustainability](#)
- [Canadian Agri-Food Sustainability Initiative Resources: Understanding Agri-food Sustainability](#)
- [Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef - The National Beef Sustainability Assessment & Strategy](#)
- [Chicken Farmers of Canada Sustainability Report](#)
- [Dairy Farmers of Canada Dairy Farming Forward to 2050](#)
- [Egg Farmers of Canada Inaugural Sustainability Report 2019](#)
- [Pulse Canada Sustainability](#)
- [Canadian Agri-Food Sustainability Initiative](#)
- [Sodexo Canada's First Sustainable Food Barometer](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture, Government of Manitoba](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, Government of Canada](#)
- [Sustainability Report 2023, McCains](#)

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