



U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance® (USFRA®) is dedicated to earning consumer trust in U.S. food and agriculture and ensuring the voices of farmers and ranchers are presented in influential conversations about food and agriculture where they can make a positive impact.

A critical component to earning consumer trust is research. USFRA is pleased to present an executive overview of a national survey of consumer attitudes regarding sustainability. These key findings are based on on-line interviews with N=1,000 targeted segments of the consumer population across the country. The specific consumer segments were as follows:

- N= Millennial (18-34 year old) parents
- N= Millennial (18-34 year old) non-parents
- N= Food Connectors
- N= General Consumers

Responses to this survey were gathered June 26-30, 2015 and the margin of error associated with a sample of this type is  $\pm 3.1\%$  in 95 out of 100 cases.

---

## OVERVIEW

---

- Of the thirteen potential different “considerations” in the food-purchasing decision, there was complete “consistency” across all four different segments on the three most important drivers of food purchase decisions – *taste, food safety, and price and affordability*. The consideration of “taste” is identified as the most important among all four segments.
- Fully 43% of respondents indicate that “sustainability of U.S. farming and ranching” is an issue that they are extremely concerned about, and a total of 83% indicate they are at least “very concerned” about the issue. This view stands at just over 70% even among general consumers.
- Just over one in four respondents, twenty-six percent (26%) indicate that whether food is grown, raised, or produced is “sustainable” is the most important thought or consideration, while 40% indicate that is a factor, and 30% indicate that it has little or no consideration. Approximately 30% of both millennial parents and food connectors indicate it is the most important consideration, but this view drops to approximately 19% among millennial non-parents and general consumers.
- As is true with consideration factors in food purchase, there is unanimous agreement among the four different segments on the main components of a definition of sustainability.

Of the nine different components offered, all four segments chose the same three components as most important in creating a definition of sustainability:

- Improving human health through access to safe, nutritious food
- Improving the environment around farming and ranching, including water, soil, and habitat
- Limiting impact from potential pollution to water, air, and soil





- In reacting to the series of statements regarding production sustainability, the results show broad acceptance of the contention that “farmers and ranchers are committed to improving how food is grown and raised” (59% agree), and the assertion that “farmers and ranchers use new technologies and innovations to protect the environment” (56% agree.)
- Of the 8 messages tested, the two that were MOST effective were the messages regarding farmers and ranchers wanting to improve soil conditions and water quality (59% more likely), and wanting to be sustainable today so that they can continue to operate tomorrow (58% more likely.)
- There is a fairly good foundation of general acceptance of the contention that “the way that most of today’s farming and ranching operations in the U.S. grow and raise food meets with the standard of sustainability.” Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents agree with this contention, while only 18% disagree, and thirty-five percent (35%) are unsure.
- Concern about “how food is grown or raised” is quite high among food connectors (82% very concerned) and millennial parents (68% very concerned), but drops off a fair bit among millennial non-parents and general consumers.
- Presented with eleven different issues related to farming and ranching in the U.S. and asked to identify the issue that is most important, there was again very precise unanimity among all four segments on the most important issues:
  - Raising and growing food that is safe to consume
  - Treatment of farm/ranch animals
  - Minimizing the environmental impact
- There is a very uniform view across all four segments of the three main components that go into creating an accurate definition of sustainability:
  - Soil health and conservation
  - Water quality
  - Water consumption

Sustainability (environmental, societal and economic) is a strategic priority issue for USFRA and additional work is being conducted which will be shared with media when available.

---

#### About U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance®

U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) is a group of more than 90 farmer- and rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners leading a movement to answer questions about how food is grown and raised. USFRA provides resources and tools to navigate today’s food issues landscape with a broader goal of building trust in American agriculture.

Follow USFRA on Twitter @USFRA using #FoodD. For more information visit [www.fooddialogues.com](http://www.fooddialogues.com). For questions about the research, please contact us at (636) 449-5086 or [info@fooddialogues.com](mailto:info@fooddialogues.com).

