

Consumers demanding more sustainability information from food industry

February 25 2021



Consumer trust in the food sector has increased over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new report from Europe's leading food innovation initiative can reveal. Credit: EIT FOOD PROJECTS

Shoppers don't trust the sustainability credentials being provided by the

food industry, a new European survey shows.

The EIT Food-funded TrustTracker project surveyed more than 19,800 people from 18 countries across Europe about trust in the food sector and its various aspects. The latest TrustTracker survey which took place during 2020 showed that farmers and [food retailers](#) scored highest among parts of the food sector, with farmers once again scoring highest across all European countries. The findings also showed that food retailers improved their trust scores during the pandemic as they managed to keep up with demand from shoppers.

Among the new evidence found in the latest report, consumers were asked about trust about food features such as the safety, healthiness and sustainability of food items.

The report found that while [food safety](#) and healthiness were more trusted than not, many consumers found that they didn't have confidence to choose from sustainable options when making food decisions.

Professor Anna Macready, leader of the TrustTracker project and Professor of Consumer Behaviour and Marketing at the University of Reading said: "One of the most compelling findings from this new report is that we can see consumers telling us that they don't have enough information to make sustainable choices about their grocery shopping. In the UK, we now have widely adopted traffic light systems to help shoppers make quick and easy choices about health benefits of food and drink. No system exists for sustainable choices.

"What's more, the range of different badges and marks for sourcing and environmental standards are often not well understood. These results clearly suggest that consumers need to have clearer information about the environmental sustainability of their shopping."

Some retailers already include information about food sourcing, and Professor Macready believes that a standard for information about food sustainability would address the concerns consumers have.

"Having an agreed set of information for food sustainability would give shoppers a lot more confidence that they can consider when doing their shopping. Information like food miles, average emissions and water usage would certainly make people think about the food.

"If we're going to take seriously the urgent action needed for climate change, giving consumers the information needed so that they can consider their own footprint is crucial."

TrustTracker is a seven-year annual survey which (quantitatively) measures consumer trust in food producers and suppliers, and consumer confidence in the foods they buy in relation to how they are produced, how they taste and how healthy/safe they are. The project has been looking at the link between consumer trust and confidence in relation to food, as these are strongly connected.

Professor Macready and the team from European universities and food businesses have also been looking at how trust affects our motivations to live more healthily/sustainably—our findings highlight the very real importance of trust in helping consumers make better eating choices—better for people (health) and better for the planet (sustainability).

Professor Klaus Grunert, Department of Management at Aarhus University, said: "As the global population moves towards 10 billion by 2050, we need innovative technologies and collaborative approaches from farm to fork to deliver accessible and healthy [food](#) products in a sustainable way. The EIT Food Trust Report shows that there are clear opportunities for the [food industry](#) to demonstrate how it is acting in the

public interest and meet consumer demand regarding health and sustainability."

More information: The full report is available online:
[www.eitfood.eu/news/post/farme ... y-european-consumers](http://www.eitfood.eu/news/post/farme...y-european-consumers)

Provided by University of Reading

Citation: Consumers demanding more sustainability information from food industry (2021, February 25) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-02-consumers-demanding-sustainability-food-industry.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.