

Harris On Demand

The Harris Poll

Food Safety Study

Prepared For:



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INTRODUCTION

The aim in conducting the *Food Safety Study* was to understand Americans’ knowledge about food safety inspections as well as their understanding of the safety of the food they purchase.

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KEY FINDINGS BY TOPIC

Home-Based & Cottage Food Businesses



87% of Americans believe food safety inspections of home-based food businesses are important.

Women are more likely than men to find this important (90% vs. 85%)

Most Americans believe food safety inspections of home-based food businesses are important.

Almost seven in eight Americans (87%) say it is important that home-based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public) are inspected for food safety practices. Just over three in five Americans (62%) say it is **very** important. (See Q2 below.)

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (67% vs. 57%).

About three in five Americans (62%) think home-based food businesses are inspected at least yearly.



A majority of Americans think home-based food businesses are inspected at least yearly.

About three in five Americans (62%) think home-based food businesses are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and two in five (40%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months. (See Q1 below.)



Less than half of Americans (47%) are comfortable buying baked goods from uninspected home-based food businesses.

Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (52% vs. 43%)

Americans are uncomfortable buying several types of food – including baked goods – from uninspected home-based food businesses.

Less than half of Americans (47%) would be comfortable purchasing baked goods from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices. (See Q4 below.)

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (52% vs. 43%).

60% of Americans believe that food purchased directly from farmers and home-based businesses is safer than food from large farms/food manufacturers.



A majority of Americans believe food purchased directly from farmers and home-based businesses is safer than food from large farms or large food manufacturers.

Three in five Americans (60%) believe that food purchased directly from farmers and home-based businesses is safer (i.e., less likely to be contaminated with things that can make people sick) than food from large food manufacturers or large farms. (See Q5 below.)

Importance of Inspections

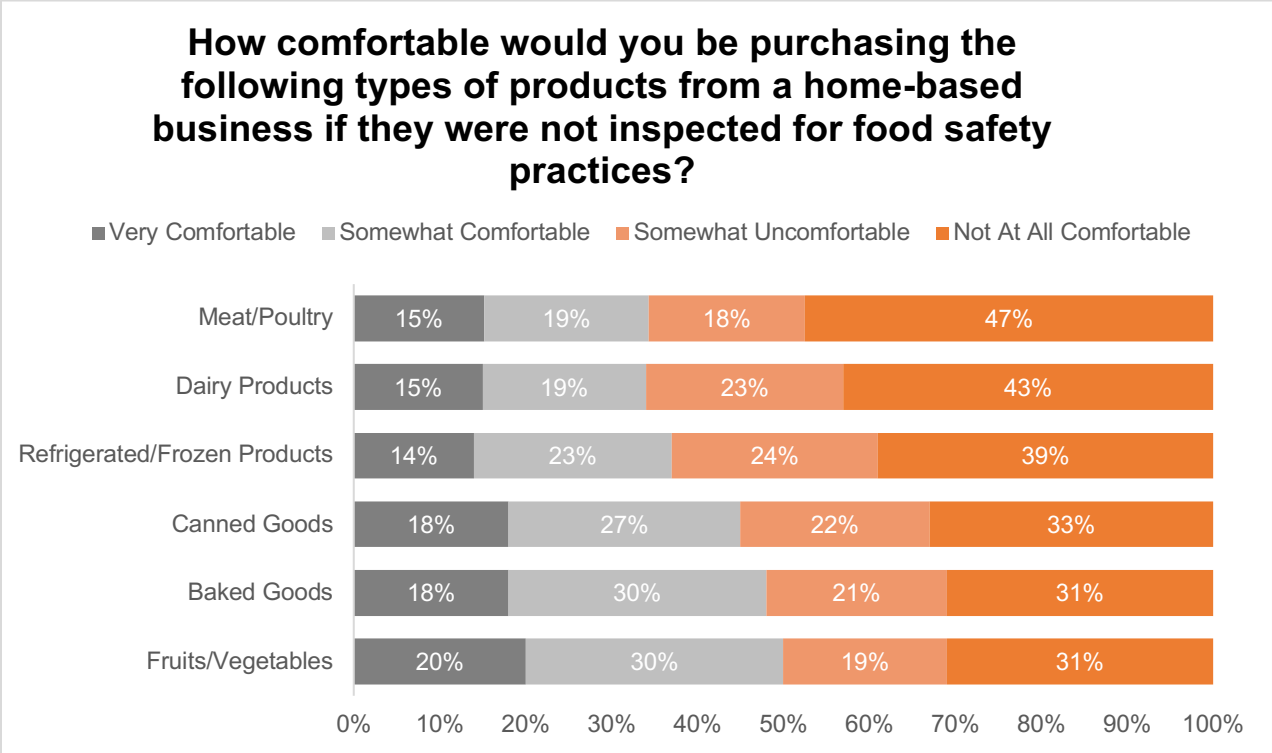
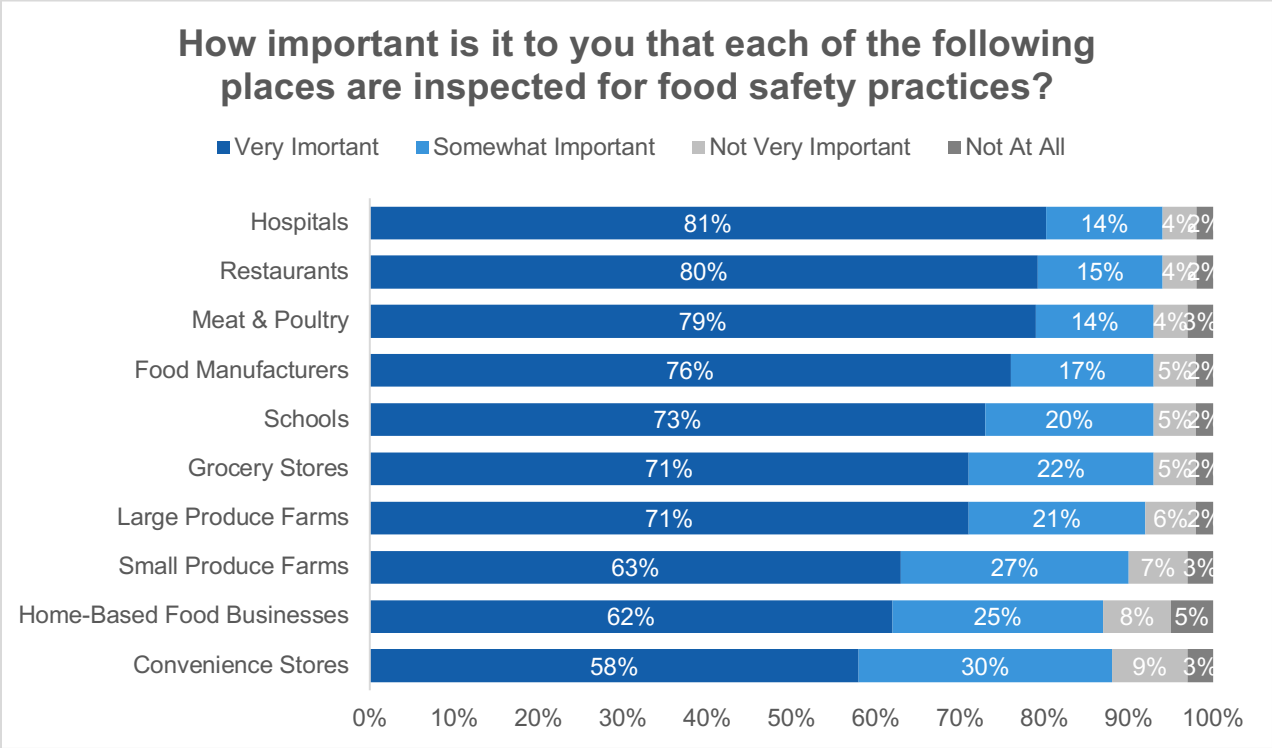


An overwhelming majority of Americans (91%) believe food safety inspections for food manufacturers is an important safeguard for the food they & their family eat.

Most Americans believe food safety inspections is an important safeguard for the food they and their family eat.

The overwhelming majority of Americans (91%) believe food safety inspections for food manufacturers is an important safeguard for the food they and their family eat.(See Q5 below.)

FIGURES



KEY FINDINGS BY QUESTION

Q1: How often do you think each of the following places are inspected for food safety practices?

Grocery stores

More than four in five Americans (84%) think grocery stores are inspected for food safety practices at least once a year, and over half (59%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Convenience stores

Three quarters of Americans (75%) think convenience stores are inspected for food safety practices at least once a year, and nearly half (48%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

- Men are more likely than women to think they are inspected at least yearly (78% vs. 72%).
- Those in the Midwest (79%) are more likely than those in the West (70%) to think convenience stores are inspected at least once a year.

Restaurants

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans (88%) think restaurants are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and nearly two thirds (64%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products

Over four in five Americans (86%) think food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and two thirds (68%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products

Over four in five Americans (83%) think food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and about three in five (62%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

- Those in the Midwest (89%) are more likely than those in the South (83%) and West (79%) to think they are inspected at least once a year.

Schools

Over three quarters of Americans (78%) think schools are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and half (50%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

- Those in the South and Midwest (both 80%) are more likely than those in the West (73%) to think schools are inspected at least once a year.

Hospitals

Over four in five Americans (84%) think hospitals are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and just over three in five (62%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Home based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public)

About three in five Americans (62%) think home based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public) are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and two in five (40%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Large produce farms

Over three quarters of Americans (78%) think large produce farms are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and half (52%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

- Those in the Midwest (82%) are more likely than those in the West (75%) to think they are inspected at least once a year.

Small produce farms

Nearly three quarters of Americans (72%) think small produce farms are inspected for food safety practices at least yearly, and nearly (45%) think they are inspected at least every 6 months.

Q2: How important is it to you that each of the following places are inspected for food safety practices?

Grocery stores

More than seven in ten Americans (71%) say it is very important that grocery stores are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (75% vs. 66%).
- Those in the South (73%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (65%) to say it is very important to them.

Convenience stores

Over half of Americans (58%) say it is very important that convenience stores are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (62% vs. 54%).

Restaurants

Four in five Americans (80%) say it is very important that restaurants are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (84% vs. 75%).
- Those in the Midwest (82%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (75%) to say it is very important to them.

Food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products

Nearly four in five Americans (79%) say it is very important that food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (84% vs. 75%).

Food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products

Over three quarters of Americans (76%) say it is very important that food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (79% vs. 72%).
- Those in the West (79%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (70%) to say it is very important to them.

Schools

Nearly three quarters of Americans (73%) say it is very important that schools are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (78% vs. 67%).

Hospitals

Four in five Americans (81%) say it is very important that hospitals are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (84% vs. 78%).

Home based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public)

Almost seven in eight Americans (87%) say it is important that home-based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public) are inspected for food safety practices. Just over three in five Americans (62%) say it is **very** important.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (67% vs. 57%).

Large produce farms

Just over seven in ten Americans (71%) say it is very important that large produce farms are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (74% vs. 67%).

Small produce farms

Just over three in five Americans (63%) say it is very important that small produce farms are inspected for food safety practices.

- Women are more likely than men to say it is very important to them (67% vs. 58%).

Q3: To the best of your knowledge, which level of government is responsible for inspecting the following types of businesses for food safety practices?

Grocery stores

Nearly half of Americans (45%) believe that state governmental agencies are responsible for inspecting grocery stores for food safety practices. Nearly a quarter believe this is done by local agencies (23%), and 15% believe it's the responsibility of federal agencies. Only 4% of Americans believe grocery stores aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 13% aren't sure.

Convenience stores

Over a third of Americans (38%) believe that convenience stores are inspected for food safety practices by state governmental agencies, and a third (33%) believe it is done by local agencies. Only 10% believe it is done by federal agencies, while 6% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 14% aren't sure.

- Men are more likely than women to say local agencies are responsible for inspecting convenience stores for food safety practices (38% vs. 28%).

Restaurants

About two in five Americans (44%) believe that it is the responsibility of state governmental agencies to inspect restaurants for food safety practices. Nearly a third (32%) believe this is done by local agencies, and 10% believe it's the responsibility of federal agencies. Only 3% of Americans believe restaurants aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 11% aren't sure.

- Those in the Midwest (36%) are more likely than those in the South (29%) to local agencies are responsible for inspecting restaurants for food safety practices

Food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products

Over two in five Americans (45%) believe that food manufacturers that produce meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices by federal governmental agencies, and nearly three in ten (29%) believe it is done by state agencies. Only 11% believe it is done by local agencies, while 2% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 12% aren't sure.

Food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products

Over two in five Americans (42%) believe that food manufacturers that produce all products other than meat and poultry products are inspected for food safety practices by federal governmental agencies, and nearly a third (31%) believe it is done by state agencies. Only 11% believe it is

done by local agencies, while 3% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 13% aren't sure.

Schools

Half of Americans (50%) think that it is the responsibility of state governmental agencies to inspect schools for food safety practices. About one in five believe this is done by local agencies (19%) or federal agencies (19%). Only 3% of Americans believe schools aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 10% aren't sure.

Hospitals

About two in five Americans (44%) believe that hospitals are inspected for food safety practices by state governmental agencies, and a quarter (28%) believe it is done by federal agencies. Only 13% believe it is done by local agencies, while 2% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 13% aren't sure.

- Men are more likely than women to believe this is done by local agencies (16% vs. 10%).

Home-based food businesses (e.g., produced in a person's home for sale to the public)

Over a third of Americans (36%) believe that home-based food businesses are inspected for food safety practices by local governmental agencies, and nearly a third (29%) believe it is done by state agencies. Only 9% believe it is done by federal agencies, while 11% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 14% aren't sure

- Men are more likely than women to believe this is done by local agencies (39% vs. 34%).

Large produce farms

About a third of Americans think that it is the responsibility of state governmental agencies (37%) or federal agencies (33%) to inspect large produce farms for food safety practices. About one in ten believe this is done by local agencies (13%). Only 4% of Americans believe large produce farms aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 13% aren't sure.

- Men are more likely than women to believe this is done by state agencies (42% vs. 32%).

Small produce farms

Two in five Americans (41%) believe that small produce farms are inspected for food safety practices by state governmental agencies, and a quarter (25%) believe it is done by local agencies. Only 17% believe it is done by federal agencies, while 5% think they aren't inspected by any governmental agency, and 13% aren't sure.

- Men are more likely than women to believe this is done by state agencies (45% vs. 37%).

Q4: How comfortable would you be purchasing each of the following types of products from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices?

Baked goods

Less than half of Americans (47%) would be comfortable purchasing baked goods from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (52% vs. 43%).

Canned goods

Less than half of Americans (46%) would be comfortable purchasing canned goods from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Those in the South are more likely to be comfortable with this than those in the Midwest (49% vs. 41%).

Dairy products

Only a third of Americans (34%) would be comfortable purchasing dairy products from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (40% vs. 28%).

Meat/Poultry

Only a third of Americans (34%) would be comfortable purchasing meat/poultry from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (39% vs. 29%).

Refrigerated or frozen products

Over a third of Americans (37%) would be comfortable purchasing refrigerated or frozen products from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (42% vs. 31%).

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Half of Americans (50%) would be comfortable purchasing refrigerated or frozen products from a home-based food business if they were not inspected for food safety practices.

- Men are more likely than women to be comfortable with this (56% vs. 45%).

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

I am often confused by what the differences are between expiration/best by/use by dates on products.

More than half of Americans (54%) say they are often confused by what the differences are between expiration/best by/use by dates on products.

- Those in the Northeast and West (both 57%) are more likely to be confused than those in the Midwest (48%).

I am often confused by what action I should take when an expiration/best by/use by date has passed.

Half of Americans (50%) say they are often confused by what action they should take when an expiration/best by/use by date has passed.

Food purchased directly from farmers and home-based businesses is safer (i.e., less likely to be contaminated with things that can make people sick) than food from large food manufacturers or large farms.

Three in five Americans (60%) believe that food purchased directly from farmers and home-based businesses is safer (i.e., less likely to be contaminated with things that can make people sick) than food from large food manufacturers or large farms.

I often have trouble figuring out if a product I have purchased is part of a recall.

Three in five Americans (60%) say they often have trouble figuring out if a product they have purchased is part of a recall.

I believe food safety inspections for food manufacturers is an important safeguard for the food my family and I eat.

The overwhelming majority of Americans (91%) believe food safety inspections for food manufacturers is an important safeguard for the food they and their family eat.

I believe food safety inspections for home based food businesses is an important safeguard for the food my family and I eat.

The majority of Americans (85%) believe food safety inspections for home based food businesses is an important safeguard for the food their family and they eat.

- Women are more likely than men to think this (87% vs. 82%).

Q6: When you hear about a food product recall, which of the following actions do you take? Please select all that apply.

The majority of Americans (95%) take some sort of action when they heard about a food product recall. About half (53%) check their fridge or pantry for the product, and nearly half throw the item out (47%). More than two in five follow directions from the recall notification sources (46%) or verify the product and code information on the package if they have a recalled product (45%). Only a third (36%) actually return the item to the store, and only about a quarter (24%) look for a press release from the company announcing the recall and steps to take. Less than one in five call the company to find out if the product they have is included (16%) or look on social media for information (15%), and 2% say they do something else. Only 5% say they ignore it and hope for the best.

- Women are more likely than men to take the following actions:
 - Check their fridge or pantry for the product (59% vs. 48%)
 - Throw the item out (51% vs. 43%)
 - If they have a recalled product, they verify the product and code information on the package (49% vs. 41%)
- Those in the South (54%) and Midwest (57%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (46%) to check their fridge or pantry for the product.
- Those in the Northeast (54%) are more likely than those in the West (42%) to throw the item out.
- Those in the Midwest (49%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (39%) to verify the product and code information on the package if they have a recalled product.

Q7: How confident are you in your ability to determine if a food product you have purchased is included in a recall?

The majority of Americans (78%) are confident in their ability to determine if a food product they have purchased is included in a recall, but only 30% are very confident.

FULL METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of AFDO between December 12-14, 2023, among 2,061 adults ages 18+.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is a global consulting and market research firm that strives to reveal the authentic values of modern society to inspire leaders to create a better tomorrow. It works with clients in three primary areas: building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. One of the longest-running surveys in the U.S., The Harris Poll has tracked public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963, and is now part of Stagwell, the challenger holding company built to transform marketing.