



Using Web-Survey Results to Improve Consumer Education Efforts

Research Focus



FSIS is conducting a five-year multi-modal consumer research study designed to investigate and evaluate different consumer food handling practices.

This research includes web-based surveys, observational studies, and focus groups.



The first iteration of FSIS' web-based survey collected information on a variety of topics, including preferences of receiving food safety information, awareness of and response to food recalls, and other food safety behaviors and attitudes.

Research about consumer preferences allows FSIS to refine its messaging and other consumer outreach efforts so that consumers can successfully act to protect themselves from foodborne illness.

FSIS will continue to use the findings of this research to evaluate and inform our food safety outreach efforts and their efficacy.

Key Findings



Respondents would like to receive food safety information from food labels, websites (excluding social media), cookbooks, television and apps on smartphones or tablets.



The information items respondents selected as most important for a recall were:

- Type of food
- Where food was distributed
- Brands affected
- Date and establishment/lot number on the packaging

61%

Among respondents who believed they got foodborne illness from food prepared at home, 61% said they did not make changes to how they prepare or handle food at home.

- This is concerning and shows that consumers are still not comprehending the importance of food safety education and the dangers of foodborne illnesses.

Applications



FSIS is using results from the survey to work with content producers to meet consumer preference for information.



Using survey data, FSIS developed a new consumer recall page for the redesigned FSIS website. This new page displays information consumers noted as most important in helping them respond to a recall.



FSIS has made the results of the research available to our fellow food safety communicators and partners, most notably through the Consumer Education Public Meeting hosted by FSIS in October 2020. These collaborations are important to reach new audiences with valuable food safety information.