



# Wasatch Front Agricultural Study

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## Methodology

To assess attitudes towards locally grown food and farming in the state of Utah, four hundred (N=400) interviews were obtained. For inclusion of listed and unlisted residential landlines, a randomly generated sample frame (RDD-random-digit dial) of 28,000 telephone records was used, based on known prefixes, of Cache, Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties. Interviews consisting of 28 questions were conducted December 11 - 19, 2013. The margin of error was +/- 4.90% and the confidence level was at 95%. Quotas were set for gender (46% male and 54% female) and proportionate to population by county (Cache [5%], Weber [10.5%], Davis [14%], Salt Lake [47%], and Utah [24%]). The additional demographics of age group and income, as well as having personally or had parents or relatives who have ever lived on a farm, were also obtained from respondents.

## Key Findings

When asked about various factors and their importance in their food buying decisions, respondents placed freshness and nutritional value above price as the most important factors. The location of a store, food being locally grown, and going to a particular store were moderately important, while organically grown food and brand name was least important (see table on next page).

NSON Opinion Strategy, Inc. a full-service, independent, public opinion and market research firm located in Salt Lake City, Utah, was commissioned by the Utah Department of Agriculture to conduct a study measuring attitudes towards locally grown food and farming.

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How important is the following factor when shopping for food?	Somewhat/ Very Important  (4-5)	Neutral  (3)	Not at All/ Not Very Important  (1-2)	Don't Know
<b>Freshness</b>	97%	2%	0%	0%
<b>Nutritional Value</b>	85%	12%	2%	1%
<b>Price</b>	78%	18%	3%	1%
<b>Location of Store</b>	70%	19%	11%	1%
<b>Locally Grown</b>	53%	27%	7%	1%
<b>Going to a Particular Store</b>	47%	25%	28%	1%
<b>Brand Name</b>	26%	32%	21%	1%
<b>Organically Grown</b>	20%	21%	59%	1%

Over half (53%) of the respondents said they sometimes check to see where food comes from. Twenty-nine percent said they never did, and only fourteen percent said they always did.

Respondents were somewhat likely to say they shop at farmer's markets or roadside stands during summer months, with the most popular responses being once or twice a month (31%) or never (20%). Respondents reported more frequently eating out at restaurants or getting fast food, with the most popular responses being once a week (28%) or a few times a week (26%).

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of questions. Farming and ranching are seen as important and respected within the state of Utah. However, only half of respondents felt that inspectors were doing a good job inspecting food and ensuring its safety. Approximately the same percentage felt that biotechnology in agriculture threatens food or safety; however, this item had the largest percentage of respondents saying they were not sure how to answer this question.

How important is the following factor when shopping for food?	Somewhat/ Very Important (4-5)	Neutral (3)	Not at All/ Not Very Important (1-2)	Don't Know
<b>Farming and ranching are important to the state of Utah.</b>	95%	4%	2%	0%
<b>Farmers and ranchers are responsible stewards of the land.</b>	84%	11%	2%	4%
<b>Livestock grazing on public lands is acceptable.</b>	79%	10%	9%	3%
<b>The continued development of farmland into subdivisions or shopping malls will eventually lead to greater dependence on foreign food.</b>	73%	8%	17%	3%
<b>A small portion of the existing tax on food should be spent to protect Utah farmland.</b>	69%	14%	15%	4%
<b>The Utah Legislature should set aside taxpayer dollars into a fund to protect local farmland.</b>	66%	14%	16%	4%
<b>Local, state, and federal agencies do a good job of inspecting our food and ensuring its safety.</b>	56%	16%	25%	3%
<b>Biotechnology in agriculture – including modifying seeds to increase production and creating insect-resistant crops – threatens our food and safety.</b>	51%	17%	26%	6%

Almost half of respondents (49%) felt that some of the taxes required to be paid to counties when farmland is developed should be diverted to a fund that protects other farmland, even diverted from local roads and schools. About a third of respondents (35%) felt that wolves should be allowed to roam free in Utah, knowing that they attack wildlife and livestock.

When asked who should take the lead in protecting farmland from development in Utah, the top response was the Utah Department of Food and Agriculture (36%), followed by farmers (21%) and City/County government (19%).

Most respondents (79%) felt that discharges into the environment from farms and ranches are not the same kind of discharges that come from factories and heavy industries.

## Key Demographic Differences in Findings

Respondents in the Northern counties of Cache, Weber, and Davis were more likely to agree that the legislature should set aside taxpayer dollars into a fund to protect local farmland than respondents in the more urban Southern counties of Salt Lake and Utah (74% vs. 62%).

Women were more likely than men to consider different facets of importance related to buying food, including freshness (99% vs. 95%), nutritional value (69% vs. 41%), brand name (20% vs. 31%), locally grown (33% vs. 19%), location of store (39% vs. 29%), and going to a particular store (28% vs. 17%). They were also more likely to agree that a small portion of the existing tax on food should be spent to protect Utah farmland (76% vs. 60%), that the Utah legislature should set aside taxpayer dollars into a fund to protect local farmland (74% vs. 56%), and that the continued development of farmland into subdivisions or shopping malls will eventually lead to greater dependence on foreign food (78% vs. 66%). Men were more likely than women to agree that farmers and ranchers are responsible stewards of the land (88% vs. 80%) and that livestock grazing on public lands is acceptable (84% vs. 74%).

When buying food, those making less than \$100,000 a year or more were less likely to consider price important (66% vs. 84%); conversely, those making less than \$30,000 per year were more likely to consider brand name important (38% vs. 25%), and were more likely to agree that the Utah legislature should set aside taxpayer dollars into a fund to protect local farmland (82% vs. 63%). Those making \$50,000 or less were more likely to say they never shop at a farmers market or a roadside stand (32% vs. 14%). Those making \$75,000 a year or less were more likely to say that a small portion of existing tax on food should be spent to protect Utah farmland (75% vs. 62%).

The youngest respondents (age 18-31) were more likely to say that government agencies do a good job of inspecting food and ensuring its safety (70% vs. 55%) and that wolves should be allowed to roam free in Utah (53% vs. 33%). Conversely, respondents age 51 and older were more likely to consider locally grown food as important (61% vs. 41%) and to see farmers and ranchers as responsible stewards of the land (88% vs. 77%). Those respondents age 70 and older were more likely to consider going to a particular store as important (65% vs. 41%).

Those who were living on a farm currently or in the past (61% vs. 47%) or had parents who had lived on a farm currently or in the past (58% vs. 43%) were more likely to consider it important if food be grown locally.

## Comparisons to 2010 and 2011 Surveys

Items with significant variation in results from year to year numbers are bolded:

% Agree/Strongly Agree	2013	2011	2010
Importance in Buying Food: Freshness	97%	95%	96%
Importance in Buying Food: Nutritional Value	85%	83%	82%
Importance in Buying Food: Price	78%	83%	79%
Importance in Buying Food: Location of Store	70%	72%	70%
Importance in Buying Food: Locally Grown	53%	55%	52%
Importance in Buying Food: Going to a Particular Store	47%	48%	51%
Importance in Buying Food: Brand Name	26%	26%	25%
Importance in Buying Food: Organically Grown	20%	23%	22%
A small portion of the existing tax on food should be spent to protect Utah farmland	69%	76%	76%
Local, state, and federal inspectors do a good job inspecting food, ensuring safety	56%	60%	55%
Farming and ranching important to future of Utah	95%	97%	93%
Continued development of farmland in Utah into subdivisions/malls leads to greater dependence on foreign food	73%	80%	77%
Biotechnology, i.e. modifying seeds & making insect resistant threatens food/safety	51%	49%	53%
Farmers and ranchers responsible stewards of land	84%	84%	84%
Livestock grazing on public lands is acceptable	79%	77%	76%
Utah legislature should set aside tax dollars into a fund to protect local farmland <sup>1</sup>	66%	52%	--

<sup>1</sup> This item had slightly different wording in 2013 that potentially contributed to the change in results; the 2011 survey uses the term "Leray/McAllister fund" while the 2013 survey uses the term "a fund".

% Yes	2013	2011	2010
Wolves should be free to roam Utah, even knowing they attack livestock	35%	41%	38%
Taxes paid to counties diverted to farmland fund, even taking away from schools, etc.	49%	51%	51%
Discharges from farms same as discharges from factories/industries <sup>2</sup>	11%	14%	37%
Never go to farmers market/roadside stand	20%	25%	22%

Fewer people felt that tax payer dollars or a portion of the existing farmland should be set aside to protect future farmland in 2013 than in earlier years; there was also a greater sense that continued development of farmland in Utah would *not* lead to greater dependence on foreign food in 2013 compared to 2011.

## Summary/Recommendations

Freshness, nutritional value, and price were the most important factors in purchasing food; location factors such as locally grown, store location, and going to a particular store were in the middle, while brand name and organically grown were the least important factors. Not all respondents checked to see where their food comes from, with a third saying they never did. Respondents were more likely to eat out at fast food restaurants than they were to shop at farmers markets or road side stands in the summer months.

Most respondents felt that farming was important and respected within the state of Utah. About two-thirds of respondents felt that farms and tax-money on food should be set aside to protect existing farmland; while only half agreed with the food safety questions, that government entities were doing enough to keep food safe and that biotechnology threatens food safety. Respondents were most likely to feel that government entities or the farmers themselves should take the lead in protecting farmland from development in Utah. Most felt that discharges into the environment from farms were different from discharges from factories and industries and that livestock grazing on public lands was acceptable, while only about a third felt that wolves should be allowed to roam free in Utah knowing they attack livestock.

<sup>2</sup> This item had slightly different wording in 2010 that potentially contributed to the change in results; the 2010 survey additionally said that these discharges “should be regulated by the US EPA”.



The change in attitudes from 2010 and 2011 to 2013 indicate that protecting future farmland is becoming less of a priority for Utahans; therefore, more communication and public outreach detailing the priorities and concerns of the Utah Department of Agriculture regarding future farmland may be in order.