

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY FOOD DEMAND SURVEY (FooDS) GUAGES CHANGING CONSUMER DEMANDS AND PERCEPTIONS

Despite an increased willingness to pay for food, many consumers expressed mistrust in the American food system, reported a September Food Demand (FooDS) survey.

The FooDS survey is conducted online monthly by researchers at Oklahoma State University, and measures consumer preferences regarding food quality, safety, and meat demand. Initiated in May of 2013, the purpose of the survey is to track consumer preferences and sentiments on the safety, quality, and price of food consumed at home and away from home. The survey collects and compiles data regarding consumer awareness of food-related issues and events, and produces an index depicting consumer demand for several retail meat products. The survey's sample size includes 1,000 individuals, and is intended to match the US population in terms of age, gender, education and region of residence.

FOOD DEMAND AND EXPENDITURES

During September of 2013, which included the Labor Day holiday weekend, consumers were more willing to pay for food products such as steak, chicken breast, hamburger and beans, but less likely to pay for items like pork chops or chicken wings, the survey reported. The survey also showed a 1.59 percent increase in grocery food expenditures from August of 2013.

MEAT DEMAND

Willingness-to-Pay	Steak	Chicken Breast	Hamburger	Pork Chop	Deli Ham	Chicken Wing	Beans and Rice	Pasta
July 2013	\$6.20	\$4.99	\$4.14	\$3.47	\$2.47	\$2.13	\$2.30	\$2.74
August 2013	\$6.60	\$4.90	\$4.11	\$3.85	\$2.57	\$2.39	\$2.29	\$2.82
September 2013	\$7.15	\$5.10	\$4.16	\$3.68	\$2.40	\$2.11	\$2.36	\$3.23
% change (Aug. – Sept.)	8.30%	4.21%	1.34%	-4.42%	-6.65%	-11.70%	2.98%	14.70%

FOOD EXPENDITURES

	Current weekly at home	Current weekly away from home	Anticipated change in at home in next 2 weeks	Anticipated change away from home in next 2 weeks
August 2013	\$91.87	\$46.35	-0.50%	-2.08%
September 2013	\$93.33	\$45.63	-0.53%	-1.77%
% change (Aug. – Sept.)	1.59%	-1.55%	6.85%	-15.19%

In September, reported average food-grocery expenditures were \$93.33, up 1.59% from August, while an average of \$45.63 was reportedly spent on food consumed away from home per week, down 1.55% from a month ago. Again, it is important to note that August included the Labor Day holiday weekend, when food expenditures typically rise because many families travel or celebrate at home.

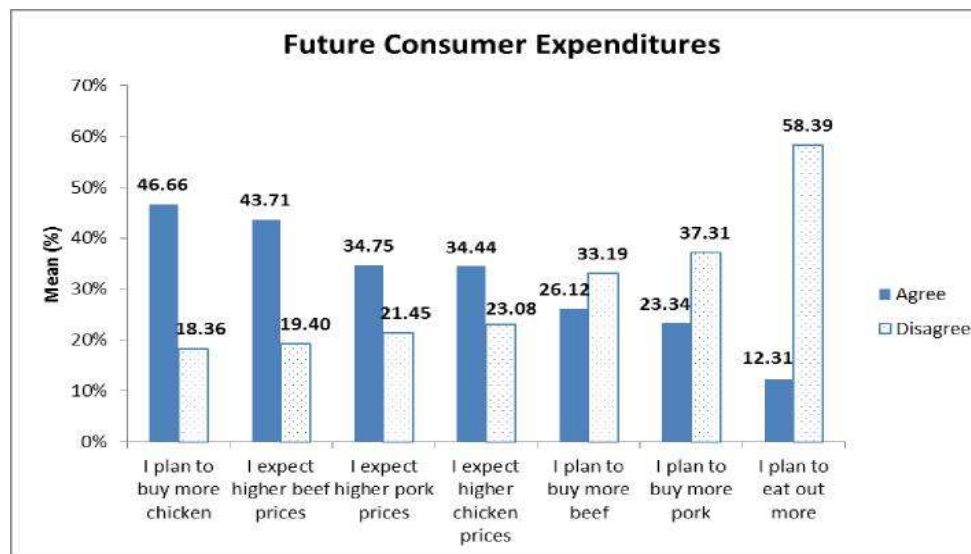
FOOD CONCERNS

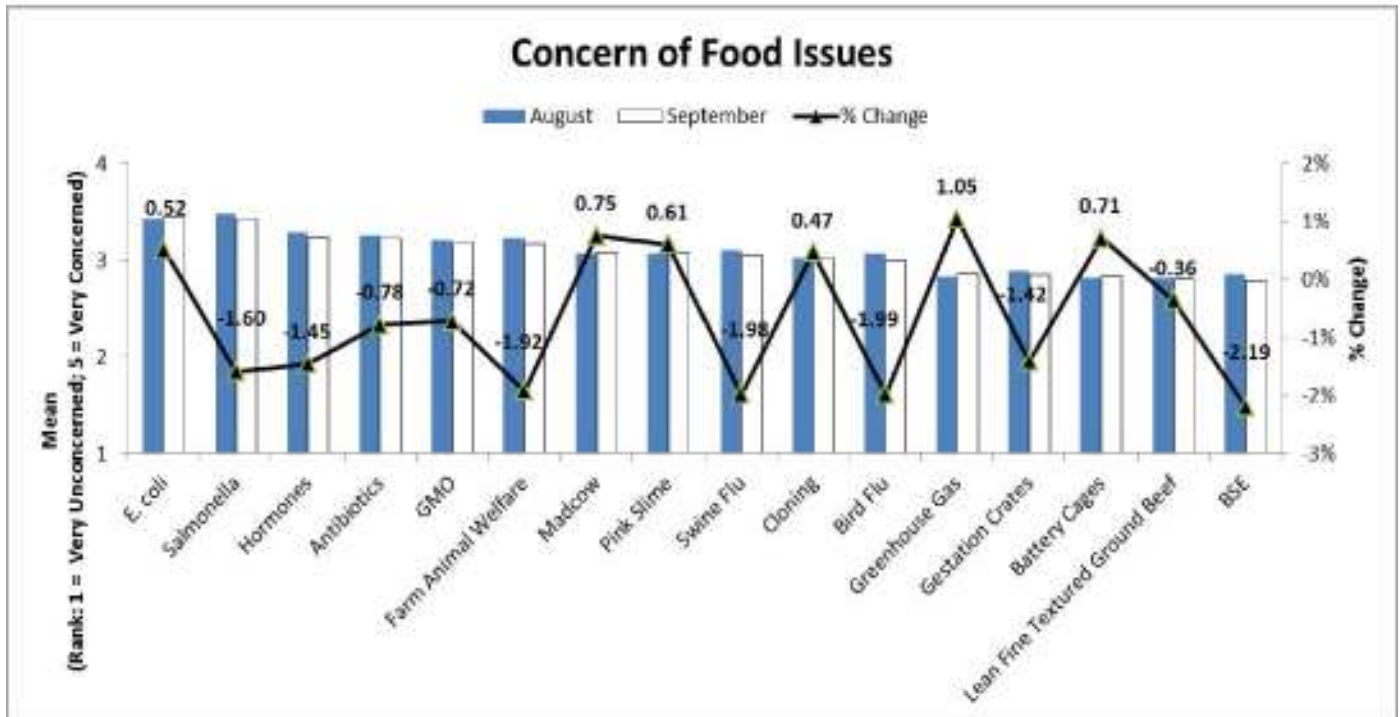
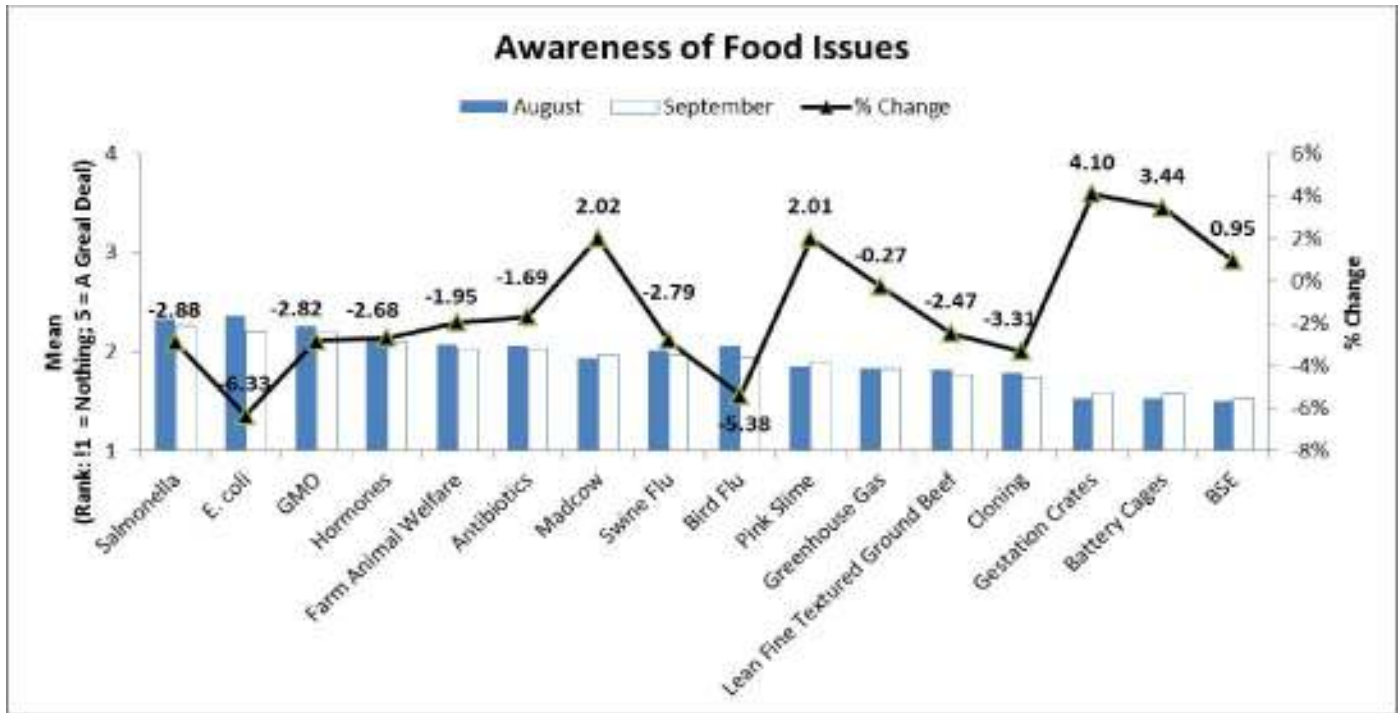
The August FooDS Survey results also show that consumers *anticipate* spending less money on food purchased for at home food consumption and less money on away from home food consumption. Similar to August, consumers reported that they expect to continue to see a rise in meat prices over the next month. However, when asked if they could think of a time when they lost trust in the food system, 40 percent of consumers responded “yes.”

Oklahoma State University researchers asked participating consumers what led them to mistrust the food system, and organized their responses by keyword. Keywords with the most mentions included: (i) GMOs, (ii) BSE/mad cow, (iii) recall, (iv) *E. coli*, and (v) price.

Consumer responses also were categorized by issue. Categories of issues included: (i) food safety, (ii) technology, (iii) food price and market power, (iv) personal experience, and (v) animal welfare. According to the September 2013 FooDS survey, most individuals cited Salmonella, *E.coli*, and GMO’s as the most visible food safety-related issues in the news over the last two weeks; the largest jump in awareness was for gestation crates, and the biggest fall was for *E. coli* and Bird flu.

E. coli, Salmonella, and hormones were again consumers’ top three concerns when purchasing food. According to the September results, the biggest increases in concern occurred for greenhouse gases; and the biggest drops in concern was for BSE/mad cow. Despite consumers saying they heard more about gestation crates and battery cages, concern for gestation crates and animal welfare fell.





More information regarding the FoDS Survey, and specific survey data, are available through the Oklahoma State University • Food Demand Survey, which can be reached at info.survey@okstate.edu