

# Consumer Perceptions of Environmentally Sustainable Food and Associated Labels



## How consumers identify environmentally sustainable food

Of the 70% of consumers that say they look for environmentally sustainable food<sup>1</sup>:



- 75% use a label (e.g., independently certified label, claims an environmental benefit)<sup>1</sup>
- 46% look for reduced plastics or no packaging<sup>1</sup>
- 36% associate environmental sustainability with a local farm or farmers market<sup>1</sup>
- 34% rely on the retailer to indicate that products are environmentally sustainable<sup>1</sup>

## Consumers value food healthiness, taste and price over a sustainability label

62% say health is more important than a sustainability label<sup>2</sup>

61% say taste is more important than a sustainability label<sup>2</sup>

58% say price is more important than a sustainability label<sup>2</sup>



## Some Canadians trust that food is produced in an environmentally sustainable way, but the majority are skeptical about labels

### Some are trusting

45% trust that products with a sustainability label are better for the environment<sup>2</sup>

40% of Canadians are confident that food products are produced in a sustainable way (e.g., environmentally friendly, resource efficient, ethically responsible)<sup>2</sup>

### Those that lack confidence

75% think products labelled "green" are a marketing tool<sup>3</sup>

44% report that sustainability labels are confusing<sup>2</sup>

Only 30% are very confident that food in grocery stores is accurately labeled as environmentally sustainable<sup>1</sup>

## What consumers look for or want to learn

7 in 10 consumers are looking for more information on sustainability in product advertisements and say they view these ads as an awareness tool<sup>3</sup>



### Over 60%

identified reducing packaging and plastic in packaging as sustainable actions they would like companies to take<sup>3</sup>

For food sustainability labels to be impactful, consumers want to learn more about the systems and standards behind the label and how compliance is verified<sup>4</sup>



Sources:  
 1. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Consumer Perceptions of Food Survey (2023)  
 2. European Institute of Technology (EIT), Food TrustTracker – Canada (2022)  
 3. NielsenIQ, Sustainable Trends Among Canadian CPG Shoppers (2021)  
 4. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Qualitative Research on Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability-Oriented Food Assurance Systems (2023)