



Providing Context on Inherent Contaminants to Consumers

International Food Information Council

Tamika Sims, PhD

May 25, 2022

About IFIC



Our Mission

To effectively communicate science-based information about health, nutrition, food safety and agriculture.



Our Vision

We envision a global environment where credible science drives food policy and consumer choice.



Our Philosophy

We work to better the health and well-being of communities and to provide evidence-based information on health, nutrition and food safety for the public good.

For Today:

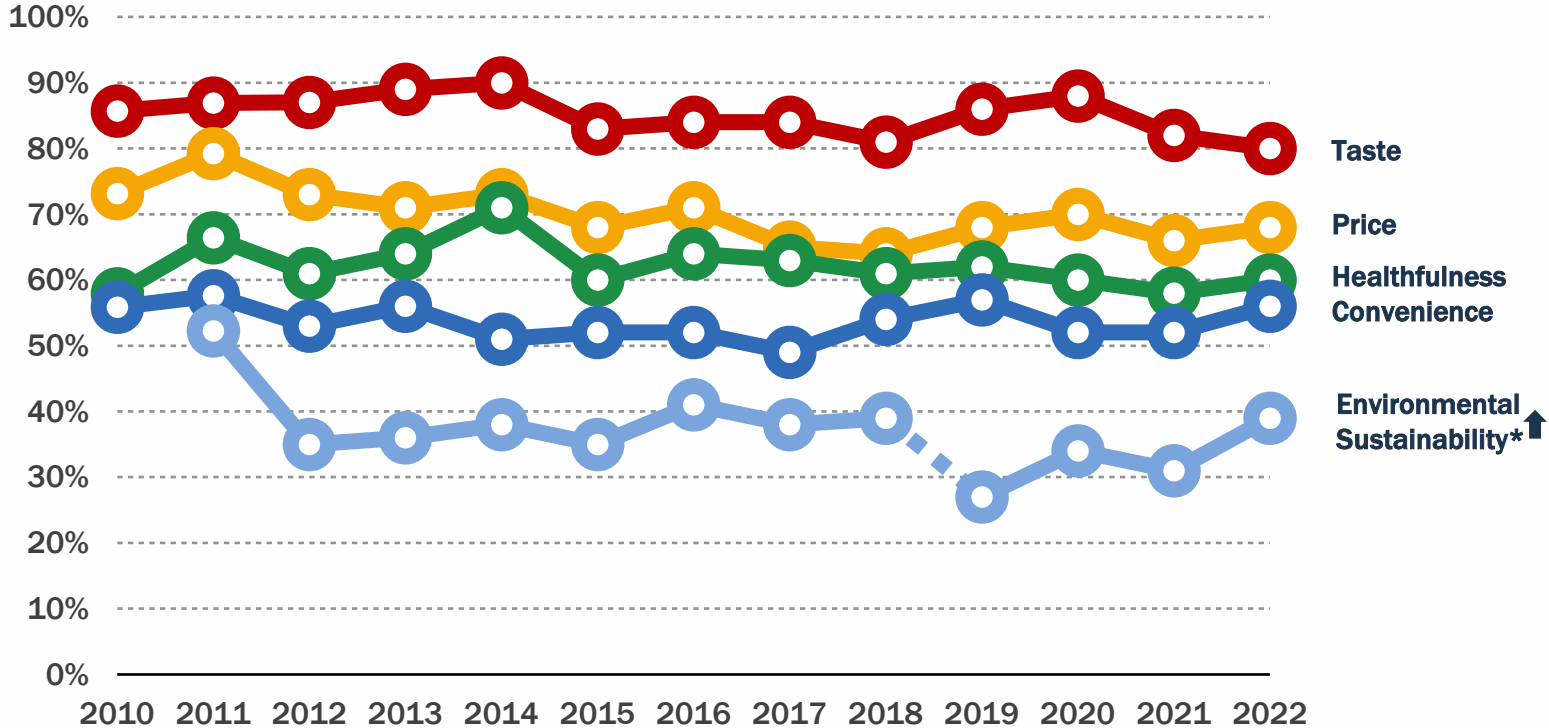
- Research on purchase decisions
- Risk communication efficacy study
- Communication strategies for different audiences

Trends in Consumer Perceptions and Purchase Drivers



Taste, price and healthfulness remain key drivers

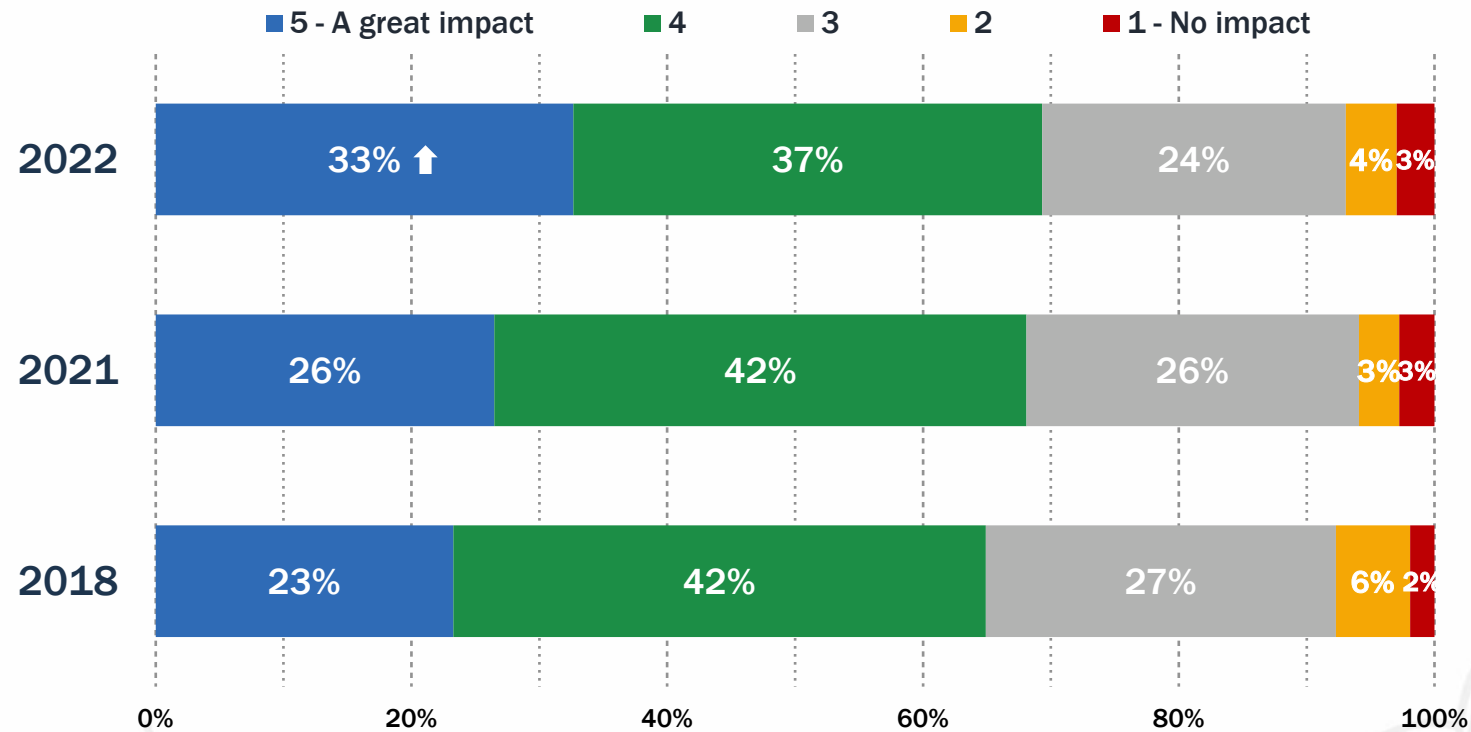
Purchase Drivers Over Time
 (% 4-5 Impact out of 5)



*[TREND]Q6 How much of an impact do the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages? SUMMARY: TOP 2 (Great Impact/Somewhat of an Impact); (n=1,005)
 Prior to 2019, Environmental Sustainability was addressed as "Sustainability"

Nearly 7 in 10 consider familiarity important when purchasing a product

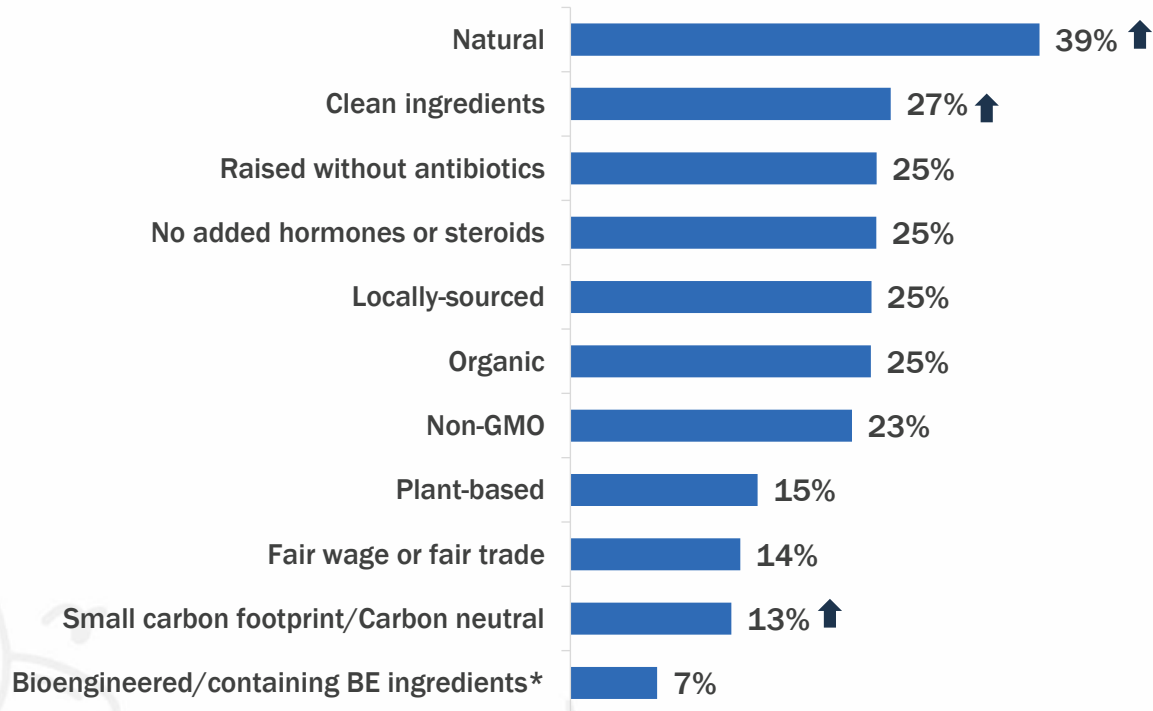
Impact of Familiarity on Purchases



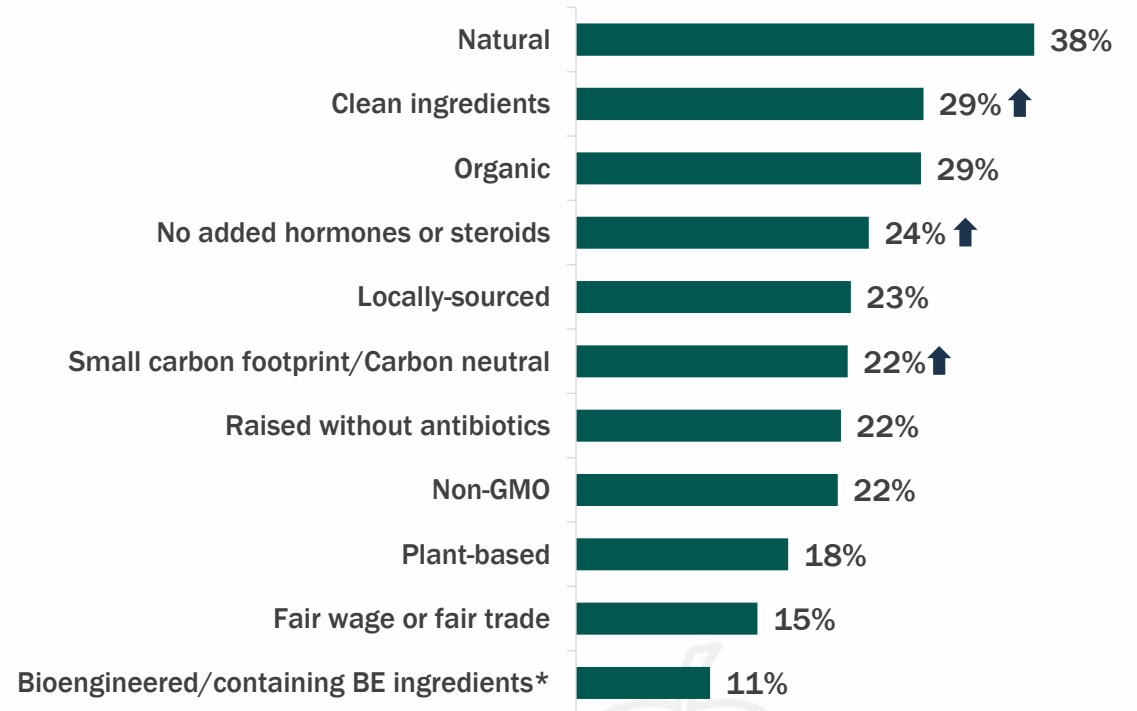
[TREND]Q7 How much of an impact does the following have on your decision to buy foods and beverages (n=1,005)

“Natural” and “Clean” labels are most impactful when grocery shopping in-store or online

Regularly Buy Products Labeled As...



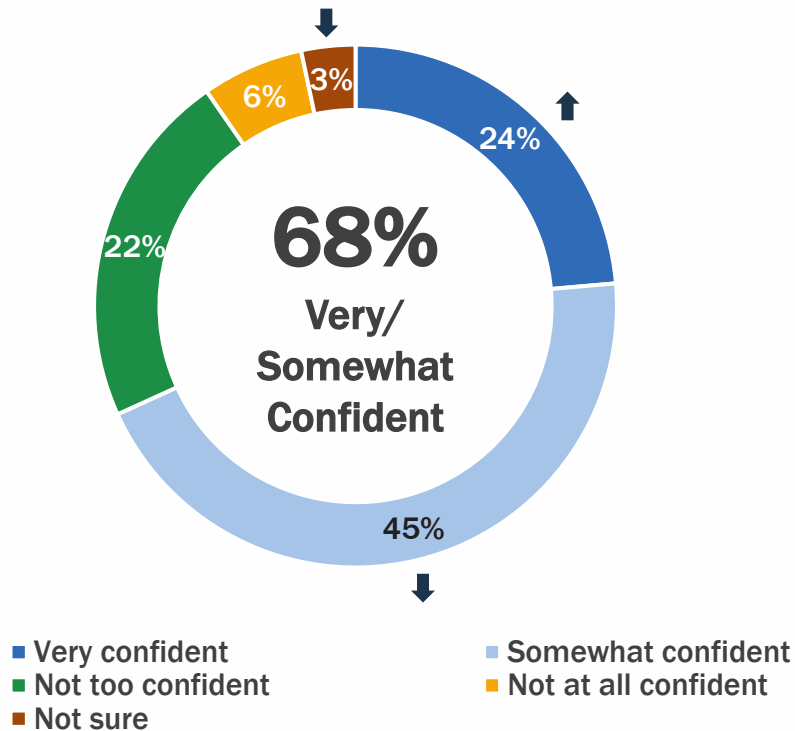
Regularly Buy Products Online Labeled As...
(Of Those Who Shop Online at Least Monthly)



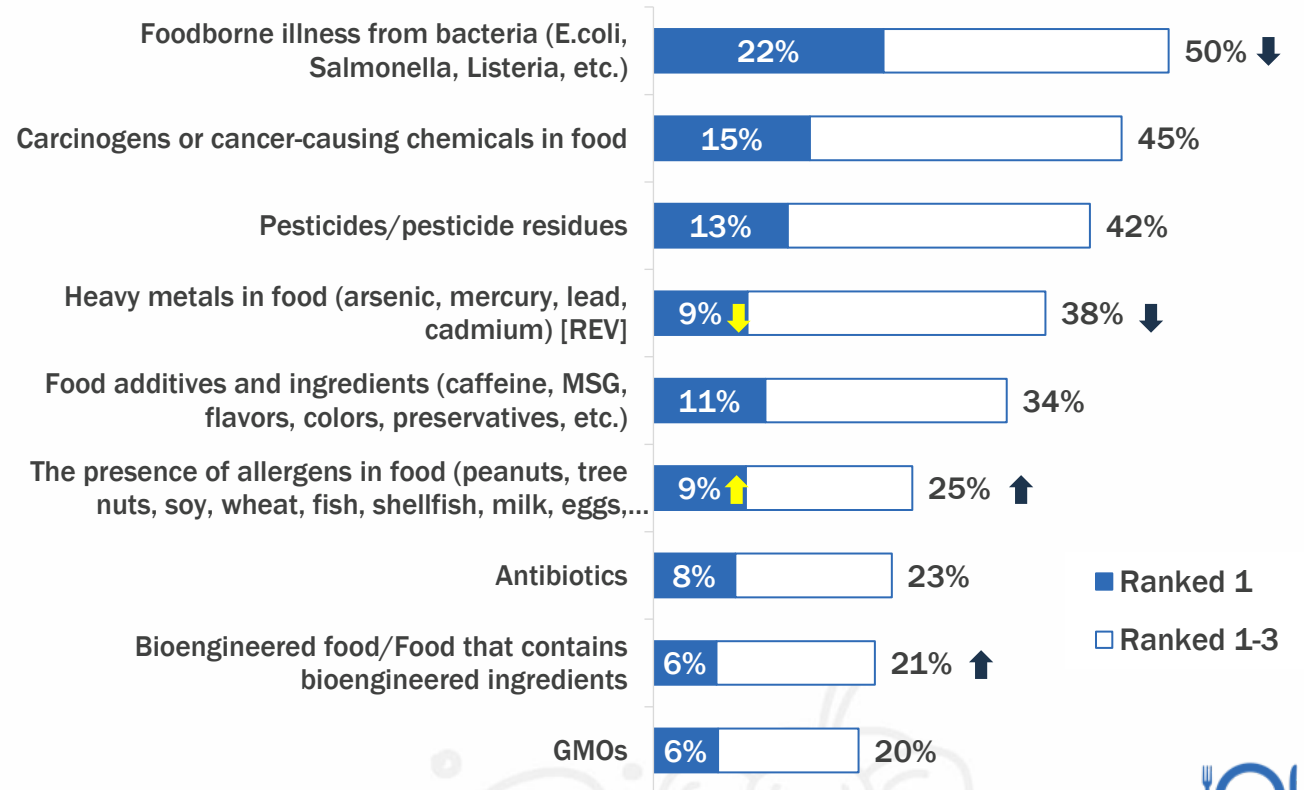
[TREND]Q54 Which of the following, if any, do you do on a regular basis (that is, most times when you shop for foods and beverages)? Buy foods and beverages because they are label as...? (Select all that apply.) (n=1,005) / [TREND]Q55 You mentioned that you buy groceries online at least occasionally. Which of the following, if any, do you do on a regular basis (that is, most times when you shop for foods and beverages online)? Buy foods and beverages online because they are labeled as...? (Select all that apply.) Filter: Shop for groceries online at least once a month: (n=505); Note: “other” and “none of the above” are not shown; *Response text abridged

Although overall confidence in the food supply is stable, more are very confident

Confidence in Safety of US Food Supply



Most Important Food Safety Issues



[TREND]Q60 Overall, how confident are you in the safety of the U.S. food supply? (n=1,005)

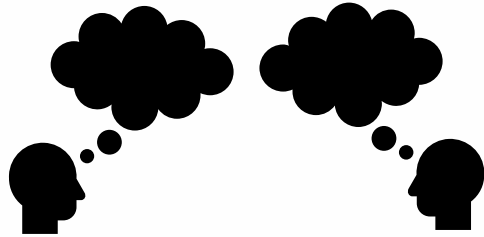
Note: REV=Revised text vs. 2021

[TREND]Q61 What in your opinion are the three most important food safety issues today? (Please rank from 1 to 3, with 1=Most Important.) (n=1,005) / Q61AA(ALL) You indicated that your most important food safety issue today is [Q61 #1 Issue]. How satisfied are you with what is currently being done to protect consumers on this issue? (n=1,005); Note: "other" is not shown

Consumer Chemical Safety Concerns and Communication Insights

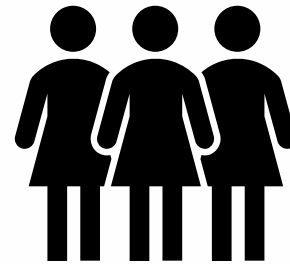


IFIC Study: Perceptions of Mothers on BPA and Acrylamide*



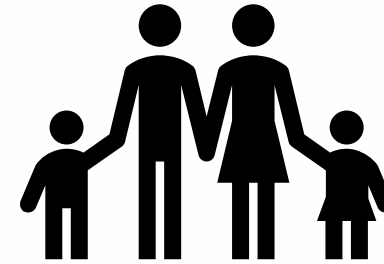
Expert Roundtable

Scientific information about BPA and acrylamide related to consumers and food safety



Focus Groups

Qualitative data gathering from mothers across the US



Survey Analysis

Quantitative analysis of food safety perceptions and risk messages

* 2015 Study Analysis

IFIC Study: Perceptions of Mothers on BPA and Acrylamide



Negative Attitudes

Attitudes toward chemicals are strongly negative among those who care about chemicals



Distrust

Distrust of chemicals stems from uncertainty linked to potential consequences of dietary exposure, or a lack of understanding



Taking Action

Very few actions with regard to specific chemicals in response to food safety concerns



Biggest Concerns

Greatest safety concerns are food safety involving microbes and potential allergens

“Stop and Go” Lessons Learned in Communicating Risk

STOP
using lengthy
articles

STOP
using heavily
scientific or
technical
statements

STOP
using
statements
that fail to
offer certainty

START
using
fact-based
evidence in a
Q&A format

START
using relatable
context to
relay risk

START
using
instructive and
prescriptive
information as
a guide

BPA Message Testing Outcomes

“It is used to prevent the corrosion of cans”

“Consensus science demonstrates the safety of BPA as a food packaging compound”

“The majority of effects observed in animal studies are probably not relevant to humans”

“There is currently no reason for consumers to change eating habits or purchasing behavior”

“Past and present studies confirm that BPA is rapidly absorbed, detoxified and eliminated”

“Check labels on bottles/ food containers to ensure they are microwave and dishwasher safe”

Top Takeaways For Tactics

Quality and affordability are prioritized over chemical anxiety

Desire to know more about **chemical benefits** while keeping their **values**

Persuasion using the willingness of consumers to **overlook risk**

Given what we've learned about chemical safety communication, **how can we communicate better in the future?**

Where to Begin...

Know Your
Audience and
Craft Messages
Accordingly

Research Fueling
Engagement

Packaged Foods Messaging to Consumers

fig.1 → Canned Fruit



fig.2 → “Fresh” Fruit

Processing can be the difference between the pantry and the trashcan.



Messages for Medical Professionals, Influencers and Industry



Whole Grains Fact Sheet

September 23, 2019



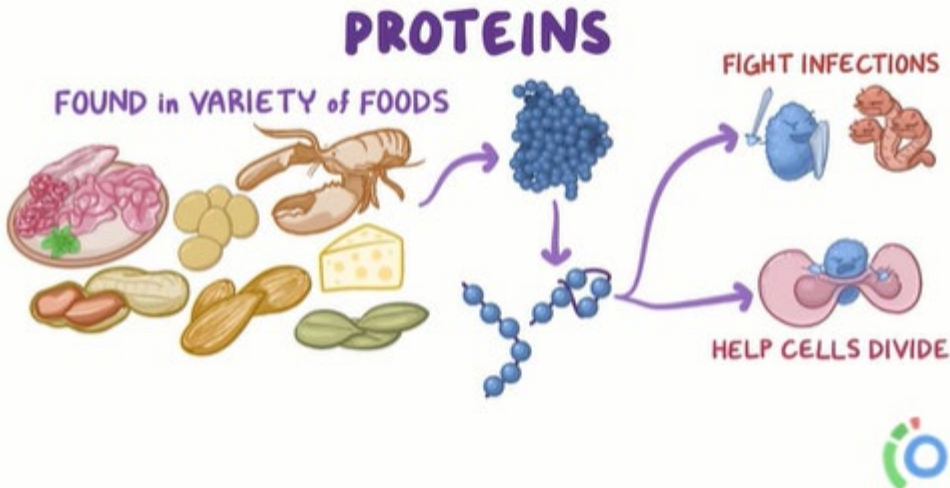
Download the Whole Grains Fact Sheet here Grains have been known as the "staff of life" for thousands of years, se source for humans. Today, foods...

Facts & Figures on Pesticide Safety & Use in Food Production [UPDATED]

May 18, 2015



Updated November 12, 2015 Recent publications, such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) glyphosate and Consumer Reports editorial article, question the safety...



Fact Sheet: Benefits of Food Biotechnology

May 13, 2013



With an ever-growing global population and rising food prices, the task of feeding the world is going to become more challenging and is just one reason to...



info@ific.org



ific.org | foodinsight.org



[@FoodInsight](https://www.facebook.com/FoodInsight)



[@FoodInsight](https://twitter.com/FoodInsight)



[@foodinsight](https://www.instagram.com/foodinsight)



[@foodinsight](https://www.pinterest.com/foodinsight)



[@FoodInsightTV](https://www.youtube.com/@FoodInsightTV)



[International Food Information Council](http://InternationalFoodInformationCouncil.org)