

Survey Finds ‘Grown in the USA’ Surging in Popularity, Right Behind ‘Natural’ and ‘Organic’

KNOXVILLE, TN -- What appeals most to Americans on a food product label? A new survey released today finds Americans most want to see “Natural,” “Organic” or “Grown in the USA.”

Asked “Which is the best description to read on a food label?”, 25% of consumers said “100 percent natural” or “All natural.” Another 24% said “USDA Certified Organic” or “100% organic.” Surprisingly, 17% preferred “Grown in the USA.”

“This looks baffling on the surface because we Americans like our bananas, oranges and strawberries year-round. We’re used to eating fresh fruits and vegetables grown out of season, including some that can’t even be grown in the U.S.,” said Suzanne Shelton, president of Shelton Group, an advertising and research firm that focuses on marketing green products to mainstream Americans.

“But we believe the popularity of ‘Grown in the USA’ reflects three important trends,” Shelton said. “First, Americans are increasingly worried about food contamination, and they’re concerned about water treatment and crop fertilization in other countries. Second, there is growing support for family farms and local sourcing -- a trend that’s gone mainstream in the last several years, including at Walmart.

“And finally, people are concerned about the economy and job losses, so buying ‘Grown in the USA’ is a way to help fellow Americans,” Shelton said.

The annual survey, called Eco Pulse and conducted by Shelton Group researchers, queried 1,013 Americans. Among its findings:

- Recycling is growing more popular, with over 60% of Americans saying they regularly recycle aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and newspaper. However, convenience still plays a big role in recycling: Households without curbside service recycle at a significantly lower rate than those who do have it.
- Americans love the idea of recycled content. Forty three percent said “made with 100% recycled content” was the best description to read on a package of disposable plates or cups. However, a significant percentage of Americans – 40% -- say they’re buying less disposable/single-use tableware. “That’s why manufacturers should focus on developing

disposable tableware made from more sustainable materials to help assuage Americans' growing guilt about single use," Shelton said.

- The number of Americans who say they're searching for greener -- more energy-efficient, natural or sustainable -- products has increased almost 10 percentage points over the past two years. Today, almost 7 in 10 American consumers say they're searching for sustainable products. In fact, green buying behavior seems to be crossing all socioeconomic classes.
- However, only 23% of Americans consistently buy green across multiple product categories -- such as natural foods, green detergents and energy-efficient appliances. While most desire greener products, many mainstream consumers are frustrated if manufacturers charge more for them. Seventy one percent of Americans say green products usually or always cost more.

"Most Americans will try a greener product if it is comparably priced and offered by a known brand," Shelton said. "But if helping the planet is the only benefit, most consumers aren't willing to pay the extra cost. In this economy, consumers prefer a greener wallet over a greener planet."

About Shelton Group

Shelton Group is an advertising and marketing agency located in Knoxville, Tennessee, focused exclusively on motivating mainstream consumers to make sustainable choices. The agency conducts a multitude of proprietary consumer opinion studies annually, including Eco Pulse™, Energy Pulse™, Utility Pulse™ and Green Living Pulse™.

Visit www.sheltongrp.com to learn more.

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