



Americans Like Buying Local Food

When it comes to food, Americans just feel better buying local, according to a new poll by the Leopold Center for Sustainable agriculture at Iowa State University.

The poll surveyed 500 people. According to the center's web-based survey, Americans feel better about the safety of their local food system and believe local foods are healthier—even though there's little evidence to back that up.

The poll, "reconfirms that consumers have more concerns about the global food system than they do about the U.S." said Rich Pirog, deputy director of the Leopold Center and co-author of a paper about the poll's results. "They feel safe with the U.S. system and the local and regional system as well."

According to the survey, 85 percent of Americans have confidence in the safety of their local food system—compared to just 12 percent who expressed confidence in the safety of food elsewhere in the world. Americans remain extremely wary of foreign foods, Pirog said.

The poll conducted during July has a 4 percent margin of error. Pirog said the people surveyed comprised a representative sample of the U.S. population.

Besides feeling safer about U.S. foods, consumers also believe locally grown foods are healthier, according to the poll. Nearly 70 percent of respondents said they either somewhat or strongly agree local food was better for them.

That's despite the fact that no concrete research has shown this to be true, Pirog said. He believes more research will no need to be done into local foods—both about their potential health benefits and how to better distribute them.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.