

CANADIAN PRESS/LEGER MARKETING

How Canadians Perceive Genetically Modified Organisms

Executive Report

July 13, 2001



1.0 Study Report

- ◆ **A majority of Canadians feel that the presence of genetically modified organisms (GMO) in food should be clearly indicated on product packaging.**

Q- In your opinion, should the presence of GMOs in food be clearly identified on the packaging?

(n=)	YES	NO	DNK/Refusal
1504	86.6%	3.6%	9.8%

- ◆ **A majority of Canadians do not know the meaning of the acronym GMO.**

Q- Can you tell me what the acronym GMO stands for?

(n=)	Genetically Modified Organisms	All other definitions	Other	Don't know / Refusal
1504	12.8 %	3.0 %	5.7 %	78.4 %

- ◆ **Even after explaining that GMO stands for genetically modified organisms, less than half of respondents admit having previously heard of GMOs.**

Q- Have you already heard of genetically modified organisms also known as GMOs?

(n=)	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
1311	48.8%	47.2%	4.0 %

- ◆ **In addition, less than half of Canadians consider the presence of GMOs in food to be VERY or SOMEWHAT dangerous for human health.**

Q- In your opinion, is the presence of GMOs in food VERY DANGEROUS, SOMEWHAT DANGEROUS, NOT VERY DANGEROUS or does it have no impact at all on people's health?

(n=)	Very Dangerous	Somewhat Dangerous	Not Very Dangerous	No impact at all	Don't know / Refusal
1504	16.4 %	31.3 %	14.8 %	5.9 %	31.6 %

- ◆ **Nearly one out of two Canadians believe that the foods they buy contain GMOs.**

Q- Do you think that the majority of foods that you buy contain GMOs?

(n=)	YES, contain	NO, do not contain	Don't know / Refusal
1504	46.3%	27.1%	26.6%

- ◆ **A small proportion of Canadians would be ready to pay more in order to obtain GMO-free foods.**

Q- Would you be willing to pay more in order to obtain foods that did not contain GMOs?

(n=)	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
1504	52.7%	30.9%	16.4 %

2.0 Results

2.1 A majority of Canadians feel that the presence of GMOs in foods should be clearly identified on the packaging.

A proportion of 86.6% of the Canadian population feels that the presence of GMOs in foods should be clearly identified on the packaging of the product while only 3.6% do not share this opinion.

A total of 93.7% of residents from Atlantic Canada, 90.9% of respondents whose mother tongue is French and 89.4% of University-educated respondents feel that the presence of GMOs in foods should be clearly indicated on product packaging.

We find in Alberta, the highest number of respondents that are opposed to such product labelling (8.2 %).

Q6 In your opinion, should the presence of GMOs in food products be clearly identified on product packaging?	YES	NO	DNK/ Refusal
Atlantic Canada	93.7 %	0.0 %	6.3 %
Quebec	89.4 %	1.9 %	8.6 %
Ontario	86.6 %	3.5 %	9.9 %
Prairies	83.5 %	4.4 %	12.1 %
Alberta	79.6 %	8.2 %	12.3 %
British Columbia	83.8 %	5.1 %	11.1 %
Canada	86.6 %	3.6 %	9.9 %

2.2 A majority of Canadians do not know what the acronym GMO stands for.

Only 12.8% of Canadians polled know that GMO stands for genetically modified organisms. A total of 26% of Quebecers versus 7.2% of Ontarians know the meaning of the acronym. Generally speaking, 24.1% of students, 21.2% of professionals and 15% of respondents with an above average annual income also know the meaning of GMO.

Q1 Q- Can you tell me what the acronym GMO stands for?	Genetically Modified Organisms	All Other Definitions	Other	Don't know /Refusal
Atlantic Canada	9.4%	1.3 %	3.0 %	86.3 %
Quebec	26.0%	6.8 %	4.1 %	63.2 %
Ontario	7.2 %	1.3 %	7.5 %	84.0 %
Prairies	9.7 %	3.8 %	8.6 %	77.9 %
Alberta	10.8 %	2.4 %	4.1 %	82.7 %
British Columbia	10.1 %	1.5 %	5.0 %	83.4 %
Canada	12.8 %	3.0 %	5.7 %	78.5 %

2.3 Even after having been told that the acronym GMO means genetically modified organisms, less than half of respondents admit to having already heard of GMOs.

A total of 54.3% of men versus 43.9% of women, can, after obtaining clarification, identify GMOs as being genetically modified organisms. A portion of 60.5% of respondents with an above average annual income and 71.1% of University-educated respondents were also able to identify GMOs after receiving clarification. Let us also mention that there exists no significant differences among various regions of the country in this respect.

Q2 Have you ever heard of genetically modified organisms also known as GMOs?	YES	NO	Don't know /Refusal
Atlantic Canada	42.3 %	51.6%	6.1%
Quebec	48.5%	49.2%	2.3%
Ontario	50.0 %	45.4%	4.6%
Prairies	49.4%	46.3%	4.3%
Alberta	40.8%	55.4%	3.8%
British Columbia	54.9%	41.8%	3.4%
Canada	48.8%	47.2%	4.0%

2.4 Moreover, less than half of Canadians feel that the presence of GMOs in foods are VERY or SOMEWHAT dangerous to human health.

A total of 47.7% of Canadians consider the presence of GMOs in foods to be dangerous for human health while 20.7% feel they are not dangerous. Yet another 31.6% of respondents did not express an opinion regarding this matter.

This opinion was shared by 54.3% of respondents in the 45 to 54-age bracket and 54.1% of respondents from British Columbia.

Q3 IN YOUR OPINION, IS THE PRESENCE OF GMOS IN FOOD VERY DANGEROUS, SOMEWHAT DANGEROUS, NOT VERY DANGEROUS OR DOES IT HAVE NO IMPACT AT ALL ON HUMAN HEALTH?	Very dangerous	Somewhat dangerous	Not very dangerous	No impact at all	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic Canada	18.2 %	27.4 %	10.6 %	4.8 %	39.1 %
Quebec	15.3 %	28.7 %	19.7 %	7.1 %	29.2 %
Ontario	15.3 %	32.4 %	14.3 %	5.2 %	32.7 %
Prairies	13.7 %	36.4 %	13.8 %	8.4 %	27.7 %
Alberta	16.2 %	32.0 %	12.7 %	4.2 %	34.9 %
British Columbia	22.3 %	31.8 %	11.9 %	5.8 %	28.1 %
Canada	16.4 %	31.3 %	14.8 %	5.9 %	31.6 %

2.5 Close to one out of two Canadians feel that the foods they buy contain GMOs.

In Canada, 46.3% of the population feels that the majority of foods contain GMOs.

This opinion is more prevalent among respondents in the 18 to 24-age bracket (54.0%) and among Quebecers (50.6%).

We note however that of the overall proportion of Canadians that feel foods do not contain GMOs is 27.1%. It is mostly the case for 31.1% of men, 34.6% of individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, 32.2% of professionals and 39.8% of University-educated respondents.

Q4- Do you think that the majority of the foods you buy contain GMOs?	YES, contain	NO, do not contain	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic Canada	50.6%	24.8%	24.6 %
Quebec	48.7 %	24.9 %	26.4 %
Ontario	45.3 %	29.4 %	25.3 %
Prairies	44.8 %	26.6 %	28.6 %
Alberta	46.8 %	21.0 %	32.3 %
British Columbia	42.9 %	30.5 %	26.6 %
Canada	46.3 %	27.1 %	26.6 %

2.6 A majority of Canadians would be ready to pay more for products that did not contain GMOs.

A total of 52.7% of Canadians would be ready to pay more for products that did not contain GMOs. A proportion of 30.9% would not be willing to do so while 16.3% did not know whether they would or not pay more to obtain GMO-free products.

Women (56.9%) were the most favourable to the idea of paying more for GMO-free products along with individuals in the 45 to 54-age bracket (59.1%), residents of Atlantic Canada (61.9%), professionals (56.3%), individuals in the higher income brackets (56.7%) and University-educated respondents (59.5%).

However, 37.3% of men (versus 24.8% of women) and 44.5% of individuals that are unemployed would not be willing to pay more for GMO-free products.

Q5? WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR PRODUCTS THAT DID NOT CONTAIN GMOs	YES	NO	DNK /Refusal
Atlantic Canada	61.9 %	23.2 %	14.9 %
Quebec	53.1 %	31.5 %	15.4 %
Ontario	52.1 %	30.1 %	17.7 %
Prairies	46.6 %	34.0 %	19.4 %
Alberta	50.8 %	33.8 %	15.4 %
British Columbia	53.1 %	32.7 %	14.3 %
Canada	52.7 %	30.9 %	16.3 %

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1504 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centers between July 3 and July 11, 2001. Up to ten recalls were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1504 respondents, is of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.