

2026 Consumer Insights Tracker

Trust and confidence in the food system, health and dietary behaviours

October 2026

Acknowledgement of country

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past and present. FSANZ also acknowledges and respects ngā iwi Māori as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

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Introduction

The Consumer Insights Tracker (CIT) is an annual online survey of approximately 1,200 Australian and 800 New Zealand consumers aged 18 years and over. The sample is nationally representative based on interlocked quotas of age, gender and location. The survey includes proportionate representation across educational levels, and of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and Māori in New Zealand.

This report presents the results pertaining to consumers' trust and confidence in the food system, health and dietary behaviours. Full details on the methodology and sample can be found in the module *'Methods, sample and survey instrument'*.

This document reports 2026 results unless otherwise specified. Due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100%. Statistically significant changes between the multi-year trend and the 2026 results, or by country in 2026 (Australia compared to New Zealand), are indicated where appropriate. Significance throughout this report refers to statistical significance at the .05 level unless otherwise noted.

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Key results

- **Farmers and producers remain the most trusted food system actor**, trusted by 83% of consumers.
- **Confidence in the safety of the food supply has remained steady**, with 68% of consumers confident that food sold in Australia and New Zealand is safe to eat.
- **Trust in FSANZ has also remained stable**, with 77% of consumers who are aware of FSANZ, trust FSANZ.
- **Cost of living remains the leading influence on food choice**, cited by 58% of consumers.
- **Nutrition remains a key driver of food choices**, with 73% of consumers rating it as important.
- **Consumer attitudes** towards food, safety, and healthy eating **have remained largely consistent** since 2023.

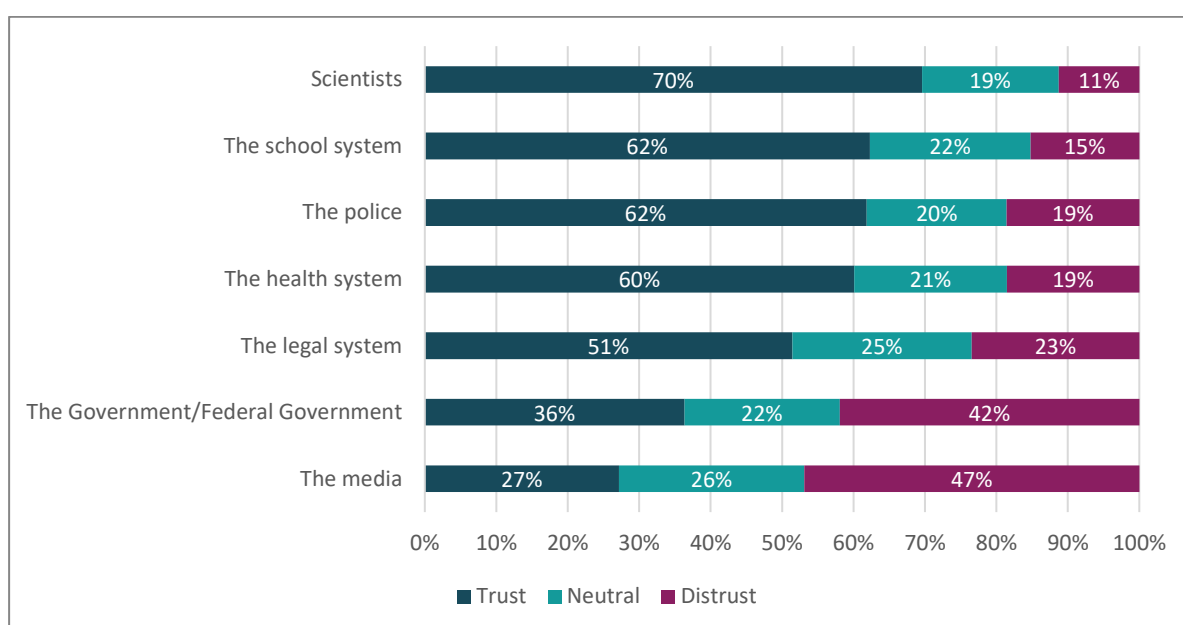
Results

Trust and confidence

Generalised trust

As shown in Figure 1, scientists were the most trusted profession or institution, with 69.6% of consumers indicating trust (by selecting a rating of 5 to 7 on a 7-point scale¹). The school system (62.3%), police (61.9%) and the health system (59.7%) were also trusted by most consumers. The least trusted professions and institutions were the media (27.2%) and the Federal Government (Australia)/Government (New Zealand) (36.3%).

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents who trust professions and institutions



Trust = score of 5, 6, 7 on the seven-point scale; Distrust = score of 1, 2, 3; Neutral = score of 4

A generalised trust index (shown in Table 1 and Table 2) was computed by averaging the scores from the different professions and institutions for each participant. The mean generalised trust index was the same between 2026 and 2025 (both $M = 4.4$) and between Australia and New Zealand in 2026 (both $M = 4.4$). The generalised trust index was slightly higher in 2025 ($M = 4.4$) compared to 2023 ($M = 4.3$) and 2024 ($M = 4.3$) ($p < .01$).

1 Q: How much do you personally trust the following institutions or professions in Australia/New Zealand? (Seven-point scale from 1 = "Not at all" to 7 = "Completely")

Table 1: Trust in professions and institutions by year, 2023 – 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)
Scientists	4.9 (1.3)	4.9 (1.3)	5.0 (1.4)	5.1 (1.4)
The police	4.7 (1.4)	4.7 (1.5)	4.8 (1.5)	4.8 (1.5)
The school system	4.5 (1.4)	4.5 (1.4)	4.7 (1.4)	4.7 (1.3)
The health system	4.5 (1.4)	4.5 (1.4)	4.6 (1.5)	4.7 (1.4)
The legal system	4.3 (1.4)	4.2 (1.5)	4.4 (1.5)	4.5 (1.5)
The Government/Federal Government	4.0 (1.5)	3.7 (1.6)	3.8 (1.7)	3.7 (1.7)
The media	3.4 (1.5)	3.4 (1.5)	3.6 (1.6)	3.5 (1.5)
Generalised institutional trust index	4.3* (1.1)	4.3^ (1.1)	4.4^* (1.2)	4.4 (1.1)

^*# Years with the same symbols are significantly different

Table 2: Trust in professions and institutions by country

	Australia	New Zealand
	Mean	Mean
	(±SD)	(±SD)
Scientists	5.1 (1.4)	5.0 (1.4)
The police	4.8 (1.5)	4.7 (1.5)
The school system	4.8 (1.3)	4.7 (1.4)
The health system	4.8 (1.4)	4.5 (1.5)

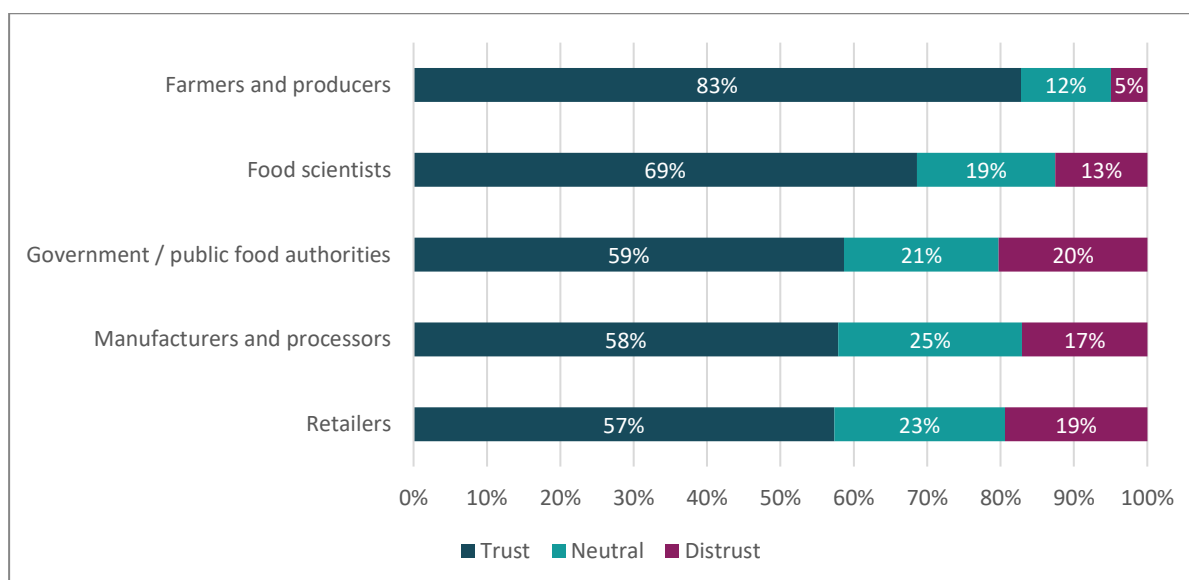
	Australia	New Zealand
	Mean ($\pm SD$)	Mean ($\pm SD$)
The legal system	4.4 (1.5)	4.5 (1.5)
The Government/Federal Government	3.7 (1.8)	3.8 (1.6)
The media	3.4 (1.5)	3.7 (1.5)
Generalised institutional trust index	4.4 (1.1)	4.4 (1.1)

Trust in food system actors

Farmers and producers were the most trusted² group in the food system (Figure 2 and Table 3), trusted by 82.8% of respondents. With a mean level of trust of 5.5 when rated on a 7-point scale (1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Completely”). Food retailers were least trusted, although they were still trusted by a majority of respondents (57.3%) (M = 4.6).

There was a small significant decrease in trust in manufacturers and processors between 2025 (M = 4.7) and 2026 (M = 4.6). Trust in retailers remained was significantly higher in 2023 (M = 4.8) than any other year (M = 4.5 – 4.6 across 2024 to 2026).

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who trusted actors in the food system



Trust = score of 5, 6, 7 on the seven-point scale; Distrust = score of 1, 2, 3; Neutral = score of 4

2 Q: How much do you trust the following people or groups to do their part to ensure that all food (including drinks) sold in Australia/New Zealand shops and supermarkets is safe to eat? (Seven-point scale from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Completely”)

Table 3: Trust in food system actors by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	($\pm SD$)	($\pm SD$)	($\pm SD$)	($\pm SD$)
Farmers and producers	5.4 (1.1)	5.4 [^] (1.1)	5.5 [^] (1.2)	5.5 (1.1)
Food scientists	5.0 (1.3)	5.0 (1.3)	5.1 (1.4)	5.1 (1.4)
Government/public food authorities	4.8 [^] (1.4)	4.6 [^] (1.5)	4.7 (1.5)	4.7 (1.5)
Manufacturers and processors (e.g., factories and production plants)	4.7 (1.2)	4.6 [^] (1.3)	4.7 ^{^*} (1.3)	4.6 [*] (1.3)
Retailers (e.g. supermarket chains, small grocers, etc.)	4.8 ^{^*#} (1.2)	4.5 [^] (1.4)	4.6 [*] (1.4)	4.6 [#] (1.4)

^{^*#} Years with the same symbols are significantly different

Table 4: Trust in food system actors by country

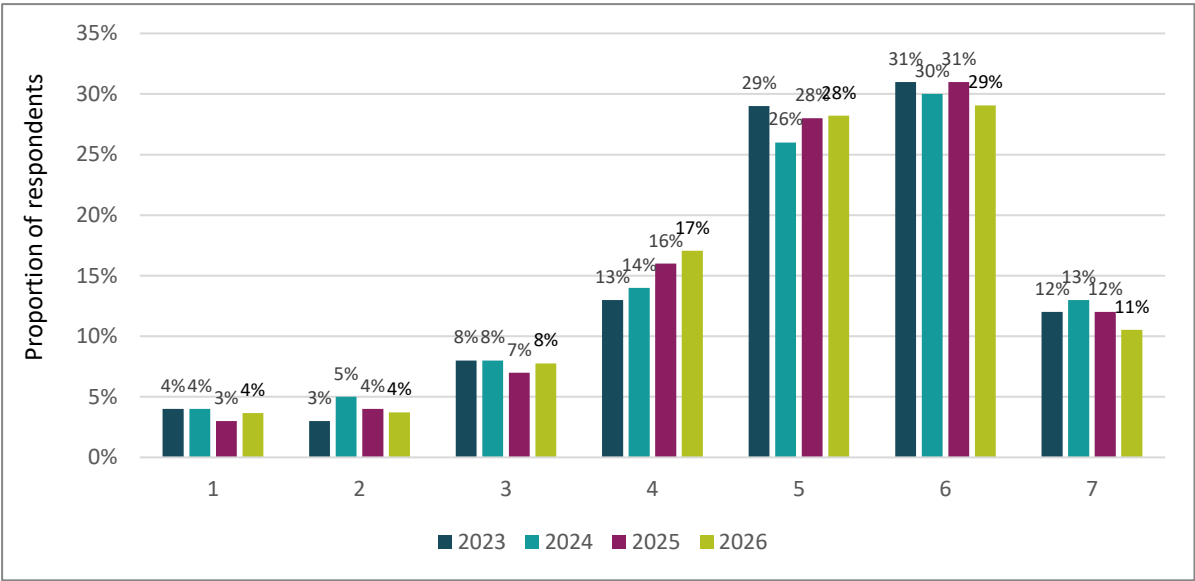
	Australia	New Zealand
	Mean	Mean
	($\pm SD$)	($\pm SD$)
Farmers and producers	5.5 [*] (1.1)	5.4 [*] (1.1)
Food scientists	5.0 (1.4)	5.1 (1.4)
Government/public food authorities	4.6 (1.6)	4.7 (1.5)
Manufacturers and processors (e.g., factories and production plants)	4.6 (1.3)	4.7 (1.3)
Retailers (e.g. supermarket chains, small grocers, etc.)	4.5 [^] (1.4)	4.7 [^] (1.3)

^{*^} same symbols indicate significantly difference between countries

Confidence in the safety of the food supply

Most respondents (67.8%) were confident³ (rated above the midpoint) that food sold in Australia and New Zealand is safe to eat, while 17.1% were neutral and 15.1% were not confident (Figure 3). Level of confidence has remained stable since 2023 (Table 5). There was no difference between countries (Table 6).

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents' level of confidence in the Australian/New Zealand food supply by year, 2023 - 2026



Q: “How confident are you that all food (including drinks) sold in Australian/New Zealand shops and supermarkets is safe to eat.” Responses were on a seven-point scale, where 1 = “Not at all confident” and 7 = “Completely confident”.

Table 5: Level of confidence in the food supply by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)
Level of confidence in the Australia/New Zealand food supply	5.0 (1.5)	4.9 (1.5)	5.0 (1.4)	4.9 (1.5)

³ Q: “How confident are you that all food (including drinks) sold in Australian/New Zealand shops and supermarkets is safe to eat.” Responses were on a seven-point scale, where 1 = “Not at all confident” and 7 = “Completely confident”.

Table 6: Level of confidence in the food supply by country

	Australia	New Zealand
	Mean ($\pm SD$)	Mean ($\pm SD$)
Level of confidence in the Australia/New Zealand food supply	4.9 (1.5)	5.0 (1.4)

Awareness of FSANZ

In 2026, almost half of respondents (47.0%) had never heard of FSANZ⁴ (Table 7). A further 26.4% had heard of FSANZ but knew nothing about what it does. Almost one quarter of respondents (23.9%) reported knowing at least a little about FSANZ, while 2.7% reported knowing a lot about FSANZ and what it does.

The proportion of respondents who reported knowing at least a little⁵ about FSANZ was significantly higher in 2025 (30.0%) than in 2023 (25.5%), 2024 (25.7%), and 2026 (26.6%). There were no other significant differences by year.

Table 7: Proportion of respondents' awareness of FSANZ by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
I have never heard of FSANZ before	981 (47.9)	970 (45.9)	929 (41.6)	1,101 (47.0)
I have heard of FSANZ before but know nothing about what it does	545 (26.6)	601 (28.4)	633 (28.4)	619 (26.4)
I know a little about FSANZ and what it does	472 (23.1)	489 (23.1)	589 (26.4)	561 (23.9)
I know a lot about FSANZ and what it does	49 (2.4)	55 (2.6)	81 (3.6)	63 (2.7)

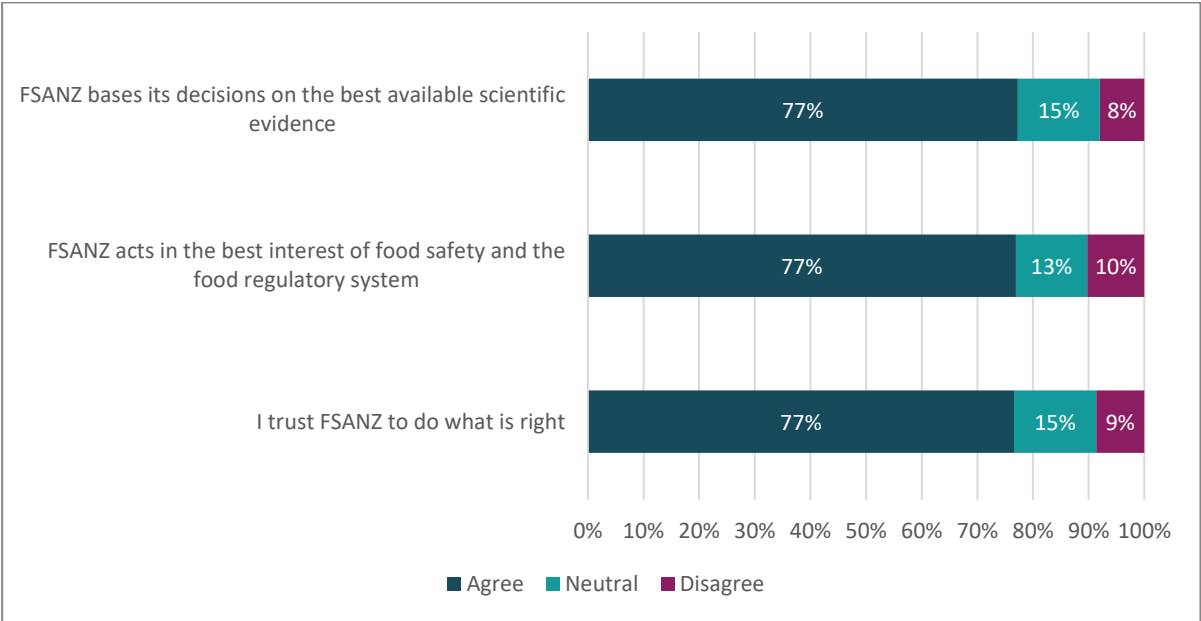
4 Q: "How much, if anything, do you know about Food Standards Australia New Zealand, also known as FSANZ". Response options: "I have never heard of FSANZ before"; "I have heard of FSANZ before but know nothing about what it does"; "I know a little about FSANZ and what it does"; "I know a lot about FSANZ and what it does".

⁵ Response options dichotomised 1) 'I know a little' and 'I know a lot'; and 2) 'I have never heard'/'I have heard but know nothing', for analysis

Trust in FSANZ

The mean trust ratings across the three statements assessing trust in FSANZ ranged from 5.3 – 5.4 (Table 8). An index of overall trust in FSANZ was computed by averaging levels of agreement across the three statements for each participant. Based on this index, the mean level of overall trust in FSANZ was 5.3 in 2026. There was no significant difference in overall trust in FSANZ between years (Table 8). Among the 624 respondents who knew at least a little about FSANZ and what it does, 77% trusted FSANZ based on this index⁶ (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of respondents’ trust in FSANZ (n = 624)



Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (In these statements, FSANZ means Food Standards Australia New Zealand) (1 = “Strongly disagree” and 7 = “Strongly agree”). Agree = score of 5, 6, 7 on the seven-point scale; Disagree = score of 1, 2, 3; Neutral = score of 4

Table 8: Level of trust in FSANZ by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023 Total n = 521	2024 Total n = 544	2025 Total n = 670	2026 Total n = 624
	Mean (±SD)	Mean (±SD)	Mean (±SD)	Mean (±SD)
I trust FSANZ to do what is right	5.3 (1.2)	5.4 (1.2)	5.3 (1.3)	5.3 (1.3)
FSANZ acts in the best interest of food safety and food regulatory system	5.3 (1.2)	5.4 (1.3)	5.4 (1.3)	5.3 (1.3)

⁶ Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (In these statements, FSANZ means Food Standards Australia New Zealand) (1 = “Strongly disagree” and 7 = “Strongly agree”)

	2023 Total n = 521	2024 Total n = 544	2025 Total n = 670	2026 Total n = 624
	Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Mean ($\pm$ SD)
FSANZ bases its decisions on scientific evidence	5.3 (1.2)	5.5 (1.2)	5.4 (1.3)	5.4 (1.4)
Index of overall FSANZ trust	5.3 (1.2)	5.4 (1.1)	5.4 (1.2)	5.3 (1.3)

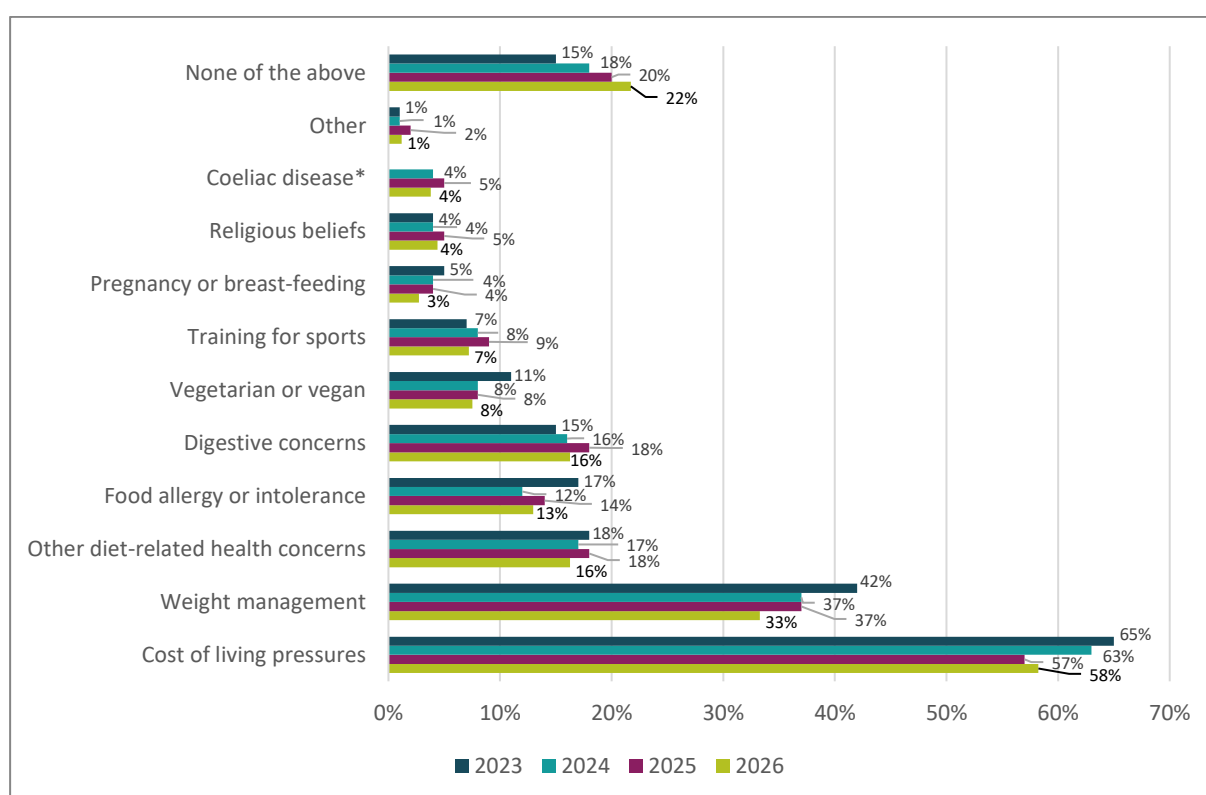
Health and dietary behaviours

Dietary influences

In 2026, 78.3% of respondents said at least one dietary factor influenced their food choices, continuing a steady decline from 85.4% in 2023, 81.6% in 2024 and 80.0% in 2025.

Cost of living pressures remained the biggest influence on consumers' food choices since 2023 (Figure 5), although the proportion of respondents citing cost of living pressures has fallen over time.

Figure 5: Factors influencing food choices by year, 2023 – 2026



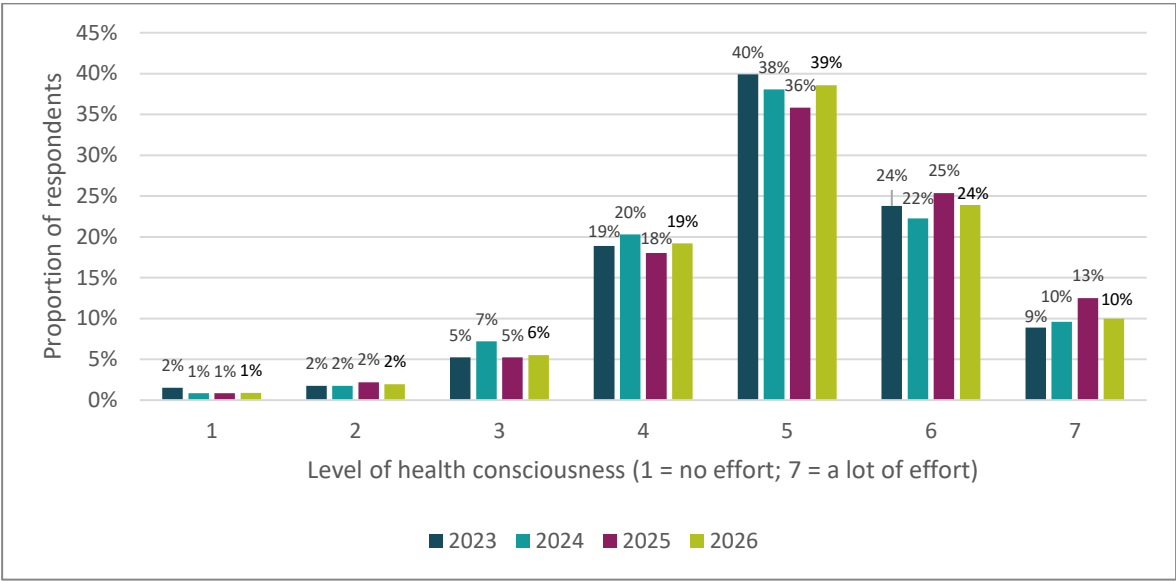
Q: Do any of the following currently affect the food choices you make for you or your household? (Please select all that apply). * Coeliac disease was grouped with all digestive concerns in the 2023 survey but was a separate response option for all other years.

Health consciousness

Most respondents (72.4%) said they make an effort to maintain a healthy diet⁷ (i.e. selected a rating above the midpoint) (Figure 6). This has remained consistent since 2023.

After a slight increase in the level of health consciousness in the 2025 (M = 5.1) sample, health consciousness in 2026 returned to those similar to 2024 and 2023 (both M = 5.0) (Table 9).

Figure 6: Proportion of respondents by level of health consciousness by year, 2023 – 2026



Q: How much effort do you generally put into maintaining a healthy diet for you and/or your household? 1 = “No effort”, 7 = “A lot of effort”

Table 9: Level of health consciousness by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)	(±SD)
Health consciousness	5.0* (1.2)	5.0^ (1.2)	5.1^* (1.2)	5.0 (1.2)

^*Years with the same symbols are significantly different

Food values

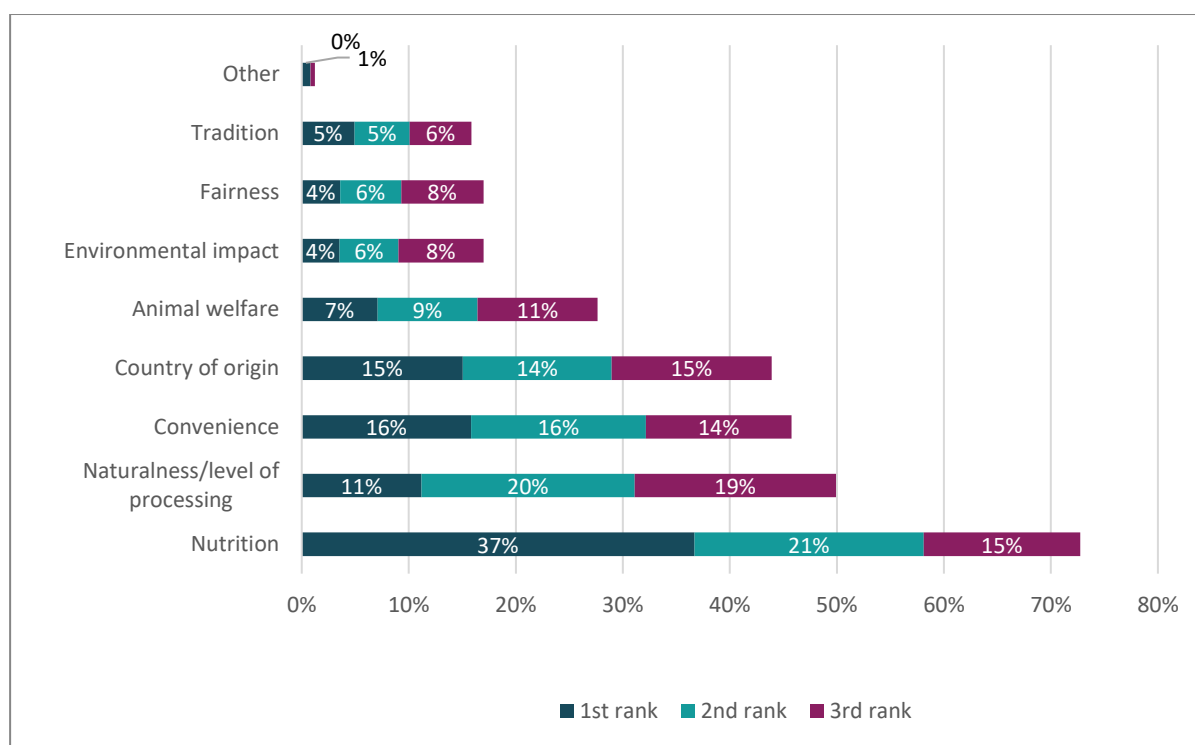
Excluding taste and price⁸, nutrition was the most commonly selected food value, with 72.7% of respondents selecting it in their top 3 priorities when choosing food (Figure 7). This was followed by

7 Q: How much effort do you generally put into maintaining a healthy diet for you and/or your household? 1 = “No effort”, 7 = “A lot of effort”

⁸ Taste and price were excluded as existing literature suggests that these are consistently important factors that affect food choice (Drewnowski and Monsivais 2020; European Food Safety Authority, 2022; International Food Information Council, 2022; Ward et al. 2012).

naturalness or level of processing (49.9%) and convenience (45.8%). Tradition was the least selected food value (16.5%). This is consistent with respondents' top 3 food values in 2025, 2024 and 2023 (Table 10).

Figure 7: Proportion of respondents selecting each food value in their top three by year, 2023 - 2026



Q: "Excluding taste and price, what is most important to you out of the following when choosing which foods to buy?". 1 = most important, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.

Table 10: Proportion of respondents selecting each food value in their top three by year, 2023 - 2026

	2023 %			2024 %			2025 %			2026 %		
	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank
Nutrition	36.0	25.0	14.0	38.0	22.0	14.0	37.4	24.1	13.2	36.7	21.4	14.6
Naturalness/level of processing	13.0	18.0	17.0	9.0	19.0	18.0	10.0	20.1	17.6	11.2	19.9	18.8
Convenience	15.0	16.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	15.0	14.6	15.2	14.3	15.8	16.3	13.6
Country of origin	15.0	12.0	16.0	15.0	14.0	13.0	15.1	12.9	14.9	15.1	13.9	14.9
Animal welfare	9.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	11.0	8.4	7.8	9.2	7.1	9.3	11.2
Environmental impact	4.0	8.0	10.0	3.0	7.0	9.0	3.7	6.8	10.4	3.5	5.5	7.9
Fairness	3.0	6.0	9.0	5.0	5.0	9.0	3.1	4.8	8.0	3.6	5.7	7.7

	2023 %			2024 %			2025 %			2026 %		
	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank
Tradition	3.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.1	5.2	6.3	4.9	5.1	5.8
Other	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.4

Q: "Excluding taste and price, what is most important to you out of the following when choosing which foods to buy?". 1 = most important, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.