

# APPETITE FOR CHANGE

The food industry is at a crossroads with consumers feeling the pain of rising grocery prices, businesses struggling with food supply chain decisions and political forces pushing for major reform. During what could be the biggest year of change for food in decades, Ketchum's Food & Agriculture Practice fielded a pioneering "Appetite for Change" consumer research study in March 2025, revealing important insights on what matters now to Americans when it comes to food.

## Increased food prices create worry and distrust for most Americans

**68%** BELIEVE THE FOOD INDUSTRY PRIORITIZES PROFIT OVER HEALTH

**57%** HAVE A NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF FOOD PRICES

**65%** AGREE THAT FOOD COMPANIES ARE GREEDY AND ONLY CARE ABOUT PROFITS

**MOST BELIEVE HIGH FOOD PRICES ARE HERE TO STAY**

**71%** accept that food prices will be higher going forward

**Only one-third** believe that food prices will go down soon

**CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE**

**71%** are worried that tariffs will raise food prices

**64%** are concerned about their ability to buy the food they need

**68%**

**WOMEN ARE MORE CONCERNED THAN MEN ABOUT BUYING FOOD THEY NEED BECAUSE OF COST**

**59%**

## The most common ways people are dealing with higher food prices

**38%** PAY ATTENTION TO COUPONS/DEALS

**33%** SWITCH TO PRIVATE LABEL

**33%** STOP BUYING CERTAIN FOOD PRODUCTS

# Americans' Perceptions of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Movement

## Most agree with the core tenets of MAHA

- As MAHA calls for “radical transparency,” only 10% of people believe that food companies have been transparent about what they’re putting in our food
- 51% of Americans believe the **quality of food in the U.S. is lower than in Europe**
- 70% agree that **the food industry is too heavily influenced by corporate interests**

## Americans view MAHA more favorably than food companies

**45%**  
MAHA

**43%**  
FOOD  
COMPANIES

**36%**  
PACKING  
PLANTS

What is your perception of the following? (Positive)

## Americans have mostly positive feelings toward those who grow and sell our food



**One-third**

BELIEVE FOOD QUALITY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. ARE EXAGGERATED

**68%**

BELIEVE THAT SCHOOL FOOD NEEDS TO BE REFORMED

**71%**

BELIEVE THE QUALITY OF FOOD IN THE U.S. CONTRIBUTES TO OBESITY

**57%**

BELIEVE THE U.S. FOOD SYSTEM IS BROKEN

## Not all MAHA messages are driving change



**ONLY 24% OF AMERICANS**  
AVOID SEED OILS



**LESS THAN HALF OF AMERICANS (49%)**  
AVOID ULTRAPROCESSED FOODS



**58% OF AMERICANS DON'T**  
AVOID ARTIFICIAL COLORS

## Communications Implications & Considerations



**Show the ways you care** about your target audience's health and nutrition journey by acknowledging their interest in what's in their food.



**Consider purpose strategy activations** that illuminate the considerations you've made in product development and research.



**Challenge negative perceptions** of food companies by leading with values and empathy. Highlight the people behind your food, share a vision for the future and show how you are taking action to strengthen the food system.



**Deliver on expectations** of radical transparency. It's time to turn the package over and tell the story behind the foods, including the ingredients, the process and the thought that went into them.



**Refresh your value messaging** to ensure you are sensitive to current inflationary and economic realities. Showcase the value your products offer.