

CONSUMER REPORTS® NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER

# ANIMAL WELFARE SURVEY

2017 NATIONALLY-REPRESENTATIVE PHONE SURVEY  
MARCH 18, 2017

## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently set a new requirement for food labeled "organic." This new rule ensures that animals used to produce organic meat, poultry, dairy and eggs are raised on farms with high standards for animal welfare, and it specifically requires that the animals have access to enough outdoor space. However, because of the presidential transition, the new rule was put on hold, and it is possible that the Agriculture Department or Congress could roll it back.

In March 2017, the Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a nationally representative phone survey to assess the opinion of Americans regarding standards for the organic label. Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) of Princeton, New Jersey administered the survey to a nationally representative sample of 1,018 U.S. residents through its CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. Respondents were selected by means of random-digit dialing and were interviewed via phone. The data were statistically weighted so that respondents in the survey are demographically and geographically representative of the U.S. population.

## Highlights

- When shopping for groceries, more than a quarter of Americans *always* (5%) or *often* (21%) buy food labeled organic. Nearly a third buy organic food *occasionally* (31%).
- Six out of 10 Americans say that it is highly (*extremely* or *very*) important that the animals used to produce organic food are raised on farms with high standards for animal welfare. Among consumers who *always/often* buy organic, this numbers rises to 86%.
- More than half (54%) of Americans say that it is highly (*extremely* or *very*) important that eggs labeled 'organic' come from hens that were able to go outdoors and move freely outdoors. Among consumers who *always/often* buy organic, this numbers rises to 83%.

## Many Americans Buy Organic Food

# 26%

ALWAYS/OFTEN BUY ORGANIC FOOD

When shopping for groceries, more than a quarter of Americans *always* (5%) or *often* (21%) buy food labeled organic. Nearly a third buy organic food *occasionally* (31%). Nearly a fifth never buy organic food when grocery shopping.

### Consumer Frequency of Buying Organic Food

	TOTAL
	%
Always	5
Often	21
Occasionally	31
Rarely	24
Never	18
Don't know/Unsure	0
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	1018

## Many Consumers Say Highly Important that Organic Food Comes from Farms with High Animal Welfare Standards

# 60%

SAY HIGHLY IMPORTANT THAT ORGANIC FOOD COMES FROM FARMS WITH HIGH ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS

Six out of 10 Americans say that it is highly (*extremely or very*) important that the animals used to produce organic food are raised on farms with high standards for animal welfare. Among consumers who *always/often* buy organic, this numbers rises to 86%.

### Importance of High Standards for Animal Welfare for Organic Food

	TOTAL	BUY ORGANIC*
	%	%
<i>Extremely/Very important (Net)</i>	60	86 <sup>1</sup>
Extremely important	31	56
Very important	29	31
Moderately important	23	9
<i>Slightly important/Not important at all (Net)</i>	17 <sup>2</sup>	4
Slightly important	8	2
Not important at all	8	2
Don't know/Unsure	0	0
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	1018	271
<i>* Respondents who always/often buy food labeled organic when grocery shopping</i>		

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, 86% does not equal the sum of the 2 contributing factors.

<sup>2</sup> Due to rounding, 17% does not equal the sum of the 2 contributing factors.

## More than Half of Americans Say Highly Important that Hens in Organic Farms Have Outdoor Access

# 54%

More than half (54%) of Americans say that it is highly (*extremely or very*) important that eggs labeled 'organic' come from hens that were able to go outdoors and move freely outdoors. Among consumers who *always/often* buy organic, this numbers rises to 83%.

SAY HIGHLY IMPORTANT THAT HENS IN ORGANIC FOOD FARMS HAVE OUTDOOR ACCESS

### Importance of Outdoor Access for Hens in Organic Farms

	TOTAL	BUY ORGANIC*
	%	%
<i>Extremely/Very important (Net)</i>	54	83
Extremely important	29	51
Very important	25	32
Moderately important	21	11
<i>Slightly important/Not important at all (Net)</i>	25	6 <sup>3</sup>
Slightly important	9	5
Not important at all	16	2
Don't know/Unsure	0	0
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	1018	271

\* Respondents who always/often buy food labeled organic when grocery shopping

## Methodology

This phone survey was fielded by ORC using a nationally-representative sample. The survey fielded from March 23-26, 2017. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>3</sup> Due to rounding, 6% does not equal the sum of the 2 contributing factors.