



Consumer Focus

► by *The Center for Food Integrity*

It's time to change the conversation

"We're feeding the world" is a mantra often used by those involved in farming and food to build support for modern food production systems. However, the latest research from The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) shows that most consumers don't seem to care.

Public support

"The global population is forecast to reach nine billion by 2050. Feeding the nine billion will require technology and innovation that will help farmers raise more animals for food and grow more crops on the land already in production," said Charlie Arnot, CEO of CFI. "But the 'feeding the world' message won't generate public support for today's agriculture technology."

In fact, the latest research from CFI, "Cracking the Code on Food Issues: Insights from Moms, Millennials and Foodies," shows that only 25% of consumers believe, "The U.S. has a responsibility to provide food for the rest of the world."

"It's time to change the conversation," said Arnot.

Healthy, affordable

What consumers care about most, according to the survey, is having access to healthy, affordable food. For the last two years, that's been a top concern.

"U.S. consumers are much more interested in access to healthy, affordable food than



in feeding the world," Arnot said. "Farmers are more likely to build support for today's farming by talking about how what they do on the farm helps keep healthy food affordable."

For example, share with them how modern farming innovations like genetically modified seed and indoor animal-handling systems allow farmers to produce safe food using fewer resources,

with the added benefit of holding down costs, he said.

Establishing trust

"Building trusting relationships with consumers is about making what you're doing relevant to them and helping them understand that you share their values when it comes to important issues like animal care, the environment and providing healthy, affordable food," he said. "Our peer-reviewed and published trust model tells us that communicating with shared values is three to five times more important to building consumer trust than simply providing information."

"Helping consumers understand that you value what's important to them goes a long way toward building trust," said Arnot.

A summary of the CFI research, "Cracking the Code on Food Issues: Insights from Moms, Millennials and Foodies," can be downloaded at www.foodintegrity.org. Contact CFI at learnmore@foodintegrity.org. 

Editor's Note: CFI is a not-for-profit organization with members that represent every segment of the food system. CFI does not lobby or advocate for individual food companies or brands. Participating organizations represent the diversity of the food system, from farmers and ranchers to universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), restaurants, food companies, retailers and food processors.