

[NUPGE](#) » [Issues and Campaigns](#) » [Occupational Health and Safety](#)

Food companies can't be trusted to keep food safe

National poll finds that 70% want government to crack down harder on food companies and devote more resources to keeping the food supply safe.



Ottawa (21 May 2009) - By a margin of more than four to one, Canadians trust government food inspectors and scientists over private food companies to ensure that what they eat is safe, according to a national public opinion poll by Nanos Research.

The survey found that most Canadians do not believe that the food industry can be relied on to police itself and that they want more hands-on policing by government to protect the food supply.

The survey, based on a random telephone survey of 1,001 Canadians, was commissioned by the agriculture component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). It is considered accurate within 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

The results were overwhelming:

- 72.4% trusted government food inspectors and scientists the most to keep the food supply safe.
- Only 13.7% of those surveyed had faith in food companies.
- 70% felt government should do more to police food companies and invest more resources in the effort.
- Only 21.9% believed companies could be trusted to police themselves.
- A mere 12.4% had high trust in food companies to ensure themselves that they are complying with safety rules. By contrast, 50.3% hold the food industry in low regard, with 23% having no trust in the ability of food companies to uphold safety rules, 27.3% having low trust, and 33% feeling neutral on the question.
- 64% said incidents such as the listeriosis outbreak are avoidable. Only 27.3% viewed such incidents as "simply unfortunate and unavoidable accidents."

"It's telling government that people expect the government to take a positive role in this area, and not just simply say that it's up to the companies," says Bob Kingston, national president of PSAC's agriculture component.

"The laws that are there to protect Canadians have to be enforced by somebody the population feels is accountable to them, not accountable to Michael McCain or corporate interests or shareholders of a company."

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is one of Canada's largest labour organizations with over 340,000 members. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families and to build a stronger Canada by ensuring our common wealth is used for the common good. *NUPGE*

More information:

James Clancy Commentary:

Poison food crisis shows Harper's contempt for government action

[Email this page](#) [Printer-friendly version](#)

News Archive
