

ACDC NEWS

March 2026

Update on Americans' trust in food and nutrition science

We are adding to the ACDC collection findings of an online 2025 national survey by the International Food Information Council (IFIC). This survey assessed Americans' trust in food and nutrition science. Among the results:

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of 1,018 adults in the probability sample expressed at least some trust in food and nutritional science.
- However, 72% expressed concerns that dietary recommendations are changing constantly, leaving them confused, frustrated, doubtful, and curious.
- Respondents said they are most likely to trust food advice that is evidence-based, simple, and delivered by registered dietitians.
- “By contrast, advice driven by shock tactics or social media popularity is far less trusted.”

You can read [“Americans' trust in food and nutrition science”](#) by open access.

“Attitudes in China about crops and food developed by biotechnology”

That is the title of a 2015 *Plos One* article we are adding to the ACDC collection. A team of Chinese and U.S. researchers investigated the attitudes of consumers, BT cotton farmers, and scientists in China regarding genetically modified (GM) crops and food. Data were collected using interview surveys. Among the findings:

- BT cotton farmers had a “very positive attitude because BT cotton provided them with significant economic benefits.”
- Consumers from developed regions had a higher acceptance and willingness to pay for GM foods than consumers in other regions.
- The scientific community held a positive attitude toward GM foods.

Authors concluded that “more effective educational efforts by government agencies and public media concerning the scientific facts and safety of GM foods would enhance the acceptance of GM crops in China.”

Source: Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, University Library, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, 61801 • **Phone:** 217-300-0029 • **Email:** @library.illinois.edu • **Website:** <https://www.library.illinois.edu/funkaces/acdc/> • **Bluesky:** @illinoisacdc.bsky.social

You can read “[Attitudes in China about crops and foods developed by biotechnology](#)” by open access.

Harnessing the power of AI (together)

Steve Werblow, president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ), devoted his recent “President’s Message” to the complexities of using generative artificial intelligence.

AI is “getting better and better at impersonating journalists, creating a very tempting opportunity for publishers and broadcasters to try to replace human insight with instant computer copy. All these threats illustrate why IFAJ membership is more important than it has ever been. ... As AI spreads, “the perspective and knowledge of professional agricultural journalists and communicators becomes more important.”

“Together, we will celebrate IFAJ’s 70th anniversary all year long,” he concluded. “We will learn to harness the power of AI as a reporting and research tool while also learning to compete with computer-generated copy. We will support and strengthen guilds around the world, build our networks and steer into the future.”

You can read “[President’s message – Steve Werblow](#)” by open access.

On falling confidence in USDA statistics

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is responding to indications that most producers, economists, and retailers have waning confidence in USDA reporting. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced last month that the Department is issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to examine USDA’s statistical data collection, analysis and research.

You can read “[USDA seeks input on data collection as confidence falls](#)” by open access.

Is there a rural-urban divide over killing wildlife?

Researcher Debra Merskin addressed that question in a 2022 issue of the *Journalism and Media* journal. She noted that “Management practices of nonhuman animals in nature (“wildlife”) are globally controversial. In some

places, individuals believe it should be up to individual landowners to ‘manage’ wildlife. In others, wildlife is seen as belonging to everyone and should be respected or at least hunted ethically.”

Her research involved a critical discourse analysis of testimonies in 2021 Oregon (U.S.) hearings involving a possible ban on coyote killing contests. Such contests are legal in most U.S. states.

Analysis of testimony revealed disregard for science. “Proponents state the issue is not a rural/urban divide, while opponents claim the opposite is true,” Merskin concluded. She suggested that “future campaigns dedicated to conserving wildlife and science-based arguments for changes in predator management practices need to focus less on the animals and more on the attitudes about rural people’s experiences if they wish to proceed in enacting changes.”

You can read [“Coyote killing contests: Persistence of differences among Oregonians”](#) by open access.

Communicator events approaching

Here are several nearing events you may find helpful, including contact information you can use for details. We welcome suggestions or revisions for this calendar.

April 13-16, 2026

“Charting new territory in agricultural and extension education.” [Information for the Conference of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education \(AIAEE\) in San Jose, Costa Rica.](#)

April 15-17, 2026

“Hungry for more.” [Information for the 2026 Agri-Marketing Conference of the National Agri-Marketing Association \(NAMA\) in St. Louis, Missouri.](#)

April 15-18, 2026

“SEJ 2026.” [Information for the conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists \(SEJ\) in Chicago, Illinois.](#)

April 28-30, 2026

“TOCA rocks!” [Information for the annual meeting of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association \(TOCA\) in Cleveland, Ohio.](#)

May 14-16, 2026

“Going the distance, going together.” [Information for the 2026 annual equine media conference of American Horse Publications \(AHP\) in Lexington, Kentucky.](#)

May 31-June 2, 2026

[Information for the CCA 2026 Institute of the Cooperative Communicators Association in Chattanooga, Tennessee.](#)

June 15-17, 2026

“Trailheads & trailblazers.” [Information for the 2026 annual conference of the Association for Communication Excellence \(ACE\) in Billings, Montana.](#)

A tip for young (and older) communicators

We close this issue of *ACDC News* with a thought about collecting family information. It’s from *The Sunny Side of Genealogy*:

“When we were young, we did not ask questions. Now that we’re old, there’s no one to answer them.”

ACDC is a deep and open resource for you, so please feel free to invite our help as you search for information, local to global. You are welcomed to follow us on Twitter [@ACDCUIUC](#). And please suggest (or send) agricultural communications documents we might add to this unique and valued international collection. We welcome them in hard copy (sent to Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, 510 ACES Library, 1101 S. Goodwin Avenue, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801) – or in electronic format sent to acdc@library.illinois.edu