

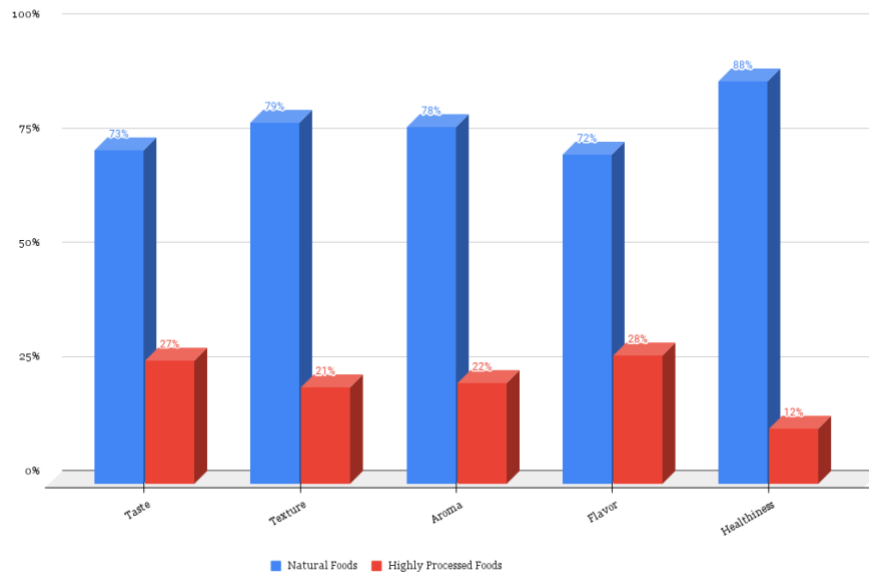


*Draft Release*

## In New Coast Packing Co./Ipsos Survey, U.S. Consumers Prefer 'Natural' Over 'Highly Processed' Foods by Huge Margins

*On Key Factors of Taste, Texture, Aroma, Flavor and Healthiness, Americans Across the Board Say It's Only Natural*

### Natural vs. Highly Processed Foods: What Do Consumers Really Think?



VERNON, Calif. (September 13, 2021) – While meat substitutes continue to sell like hot cakes – or, more accurately, hot dogs – Americans aren't wild about how the new crop of faux beef and pork products are manufactured – or about their similarity to the real thing.

So say respondents in [Coast Packing Company's](#) most recent Animal Fats Study, conducted in mid-August among 1,004 consumers nationwide by Ipsos Research. On the table were attitudes assessing the relative merits of processed foods, including artificial meat

substitutes, and natural animal fats, across five fundamental variables – taste, texture, aroma, flavor and healthiness.

Consumers were asked: “In thinking about the characteristics of the foods you eat, do you prefer natural foods (sourced from raw and/or animal-based ingredients, with few additives) or highly processed foods (vegetable oil-based food items like hydrogenated oils, palm oil, margarine and spreads, etc.) with regard to each of the following factors?”

Respondents gave the highest mark (88 percent) to natural foods for “healthiness,” followed by “texture” (79 percent), “aroma” (78 percent) “taste” (73 percent) and “flavor” (72 percent). Where highly processed foods were concerned, “healthiness” finished dead last, at 12 percent. Within the highly processed realm, flavor came out on top, at 28 percent, with taste (27 percent), aroma (22 percent) and texture (21 percent) following in turn.

The findings ratify the first joint [Coast Packing Company/Healthy Fats Coalition](#) (HFC) Animal Fats Ipsos study, fielded in late February 2020, just prior to the pandemic. In the 2020 survey, almost two-thirds of Americans said they believe that natural fats -- lard, beef tallow, butter, chicken fat, duck fat, etc. -- are healthier than processed foods. Only 15 percent said processed foods are healthier than natural fats, and 22 percent didn’t know. Building on those results, the latest study shows that sentiment is even more clear-cut on the question of “highly processed” vs. “natural” foods. Overall, almost two-thirds indicated that they know that plant-based meat is a highly processed food.

Among the five factors, the new study exposed a small but persistent gender divide, with women preferring natural foods by a 7-to 8-point margin in virtually every case. Flipping that around, men were more partial to highly processed ingredients by similar margins. On the issue of healthiness, while men and women both strongly favored natural foods over highly processed alternatives, the gap persisted (93 percent of women vs. 83 percent of men).

Viewed by region, those in the South and the West were relatively more keen on natural foods for flavor (at 74 percent, a 5 percent delta), while those ages 18-34 were more open to highly processed foods (32 percent), by nearly 10 percent, than those in other age brackets. Consumers over 55 were least enthusiastic about highly processed foods, at just 9 percent.

“Underscoring our earlier survey, consumers increasingly get it -- they understand that highly processed foods just aren’t conducive to promoting health,” said Eric R. Gustafson, CEO, Coast Packing. “They also recognize that the trend toward plant-based meat substitutes comes at a cost – not just at the check-out counter, but in terms of how these highly processed additions to our diet are manufactured.

“By contrast, farm fats are a net positive for health and well being,” Gustafson said. “That’s why the natural makeup of both lard and tallow matter so much. Neither is highly processed or contains artificial trans fats found in hydrogenated shortenings. Today’s

consumers clearly value authenticity and want food that is made with integrity and respect for culinary traditions, as our latest survey demonstrates.”

In a recent study, Tufts University nutrition epidemiologist [Fang Fang Zhang](#) described as "industrial formulations" those ultra-processed foods that bear no resemblance to their original forms – foods made from byproducts of other foods, or synthesized in labs, pre-processed by molding or frying. His research indicated that “ultraprocessed foods now comprise 2/3 of calories in children and teen diets.”

The original Coast/HFC survey coincided with release of *The Power of Meat 2020* from The Food Industry Association and the North American Meat Institute (NAMI), an in-depth study of meat and poultry through shoppers’ eyes (<https://www.perishablenews.com/meatpoultry/meat-institute-and-fmi-release-2020-power-of-meat-analysis/>).

### **About the Ipsos Survey**

The Coast Packing/Ipsos study was fielded from August 12-13, 2021. Ipsos eNation surveys consist of a minimum of 1,000 completes with adults 18 years of age or older in the contiguous United States. The sample includes individuals selected from the online segment of Ipsos’ iSay/Ampario Panel, and is balanced to be representative of the general population based upon region, gender, age, race, and household income data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Results have a credibility interval of +/- 3.5 percentage points. For a copy of the survey results, please email [admin@edgecommunicationsinc.com](mailto:admin@edgecommunicationsinc.com).

### **About Coast Packing Company**

Now marking its 99<sup>th</sup> year in business, Coast Packing Company ([www.coastpacking.com](http://www.coastpacking.com)), a closely held corporation, is the number one supplier of animal fat shortenings – particularly lard and beef tallow -- in the Western United States. The company sells to major manufacturers, distributors, retailers, smaller food service operations and leading bakeries. The company participates actively in diverse ethnic markets – from Hispanic retail chains, with its VIVA brand, to various Asian specialty markets. Based in Vernon, Calif., Coast Packing Company is regional, national and, increasingly, global. In some cases, supplier relationships are multigenerational, extending back 50 years and more. Coast is a founding member of the Healthy Fats Coalition (<http://www.healthyfatscoalition.org/>).

For more information about Coast Packing Company, visit: [www.coastpacking.com](http://www.coastpacking.com). Follow us via social media on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/coastpackingco](http://www.facebook.com/coastpackingco), Twitter [@coastpackingco](https://twitter.com/coastpackingco) and Pinterest [www.pinterest.com/coastpackingco](http://www.pinterest.com/coastpackingco).

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