



SPOTLIGHT
SURVEY

Americans' Perceptions Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program

September 2025



METHODOLOGY



The International Food Information Council (IFIC) commissioned an online survey among U.S. consumers to measure knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) Notification Programs. One thousand and two adults ages 18 years and older completed the online survey from July 11- July 16, 2025, and data were weighted to ensure proportional results. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The Bayesian confidence level for the survey sample (n=1002) is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error of ± 3.1 at the 95% confidence level. Callouts of statistically significant results are included where appropriate on slides displaying results. Something is statistically significant if the result cannot be attributed to random chance. Statistical significance in this report is only compared within each demographic group (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

SUGGESTED CITATION:

International Food Information Council (IFIC). IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program. September 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates about [80%](#) of the American food supply. Part of this oversight is managed through the FDA Generally Recognized As Safe ([GRAS](#)) program. Currently, the submission of a GRAS notice allows manufacturers to add substances to food when widely known scientific evidence and qualified experts determine them safe for their intended use. However, the Spring 2025 Unified Agenda contains a [proposed rule](#) to amend the GRAS regulations.

Despite its role in food regulation, awareness of the GRAS program was low in 2024. According to the [2024 IFIC Food & Health Survey](#), 28% of Americans who view food additives and ingredients as a top food safety issue said they were very (8%) or somewhat (20%) familiar with GRAS.

This *IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program* explores sentiments about the awareness, effectiveness, and confidence in the federal government to regulate what Americans eat and drink. In this *2025 IFIC Spotlight Survey*, just over half of Americans (53%) say they have heard of the FDA GRAS program, and among them, 65% consider it effective (40% somewhat, 25% very), while 16% view it as ineffective (10% somewhat, 6% very)—a +49-point margin.

Confidence in the safety of food ingredients tells a similar story. Most Americans (72%) are confident in the safety of the ingredients in the foods and beverages they buy, compared with only 26% who are not confident—a +46-point margin. Yet overall confidence in the safety of the U.S. food supply has dropped to historic lows; according to the [2025 IFIC Food & Health Survey](#), just 55% expressed confidence while 41% lacked it, a margin of only +14 points. This contrast suggests Americans are more confident in the safety of what they personally put in their shopping carts than they are in the safety of the broader food supply.

Still, the importance of food additive and ingredient safety has [increased among Americans in the past year](#), and many want to know what the federal government and food companies are doing to keep food safe. In this *IFIC Spotlight Survey*, half (51%) believe the federal government has evaluated the safety of ingredients in their foods, while 24% believe they have not and 25% are unsure. At the same time, a majority (57%) say the federal government should be responsible for ensuring food ingredient safety, compared with 34% who believe that responsibility should fall to individual states. With rising consumer concerns, clear and consistent communication about federal and state government action on food safety is critical.

Source: IFIC Spotlight Survey: Americans' Perceptions Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program. September 2025.



KEY FINDINGS

More than seven in ten Americans are confident in the safety of the ingredients in the foods and beverages that they buy.

One in four Americans (25%) say they are very confident in the safety of the ingredients in the foods and beverages that they buy, and nearly half (47%) are somewhat confident. One in four Americans (26%) are either not too confident (19%) or not at all confident (7%).

Most Americans believe the federal government should be responsible for evaluating the safety of food ingredients.

More than half of Americans (57%) believe the federal government should be responsible for evaluating the safety of food ingredients. Slightly fewer (46%) believe ingredient manufacturers should be responsible for the safety of their ingredients, while a similar percentage of Americans (45%) believe the companies that sell products that contain the ingredients should be responsible. One in three (34%) believe each U.S. state government should be responsible for evaluating food ingredient safety, while 29% believe that independent scientific organizations should be responsible.

Americans are divided in their belief that the U.S. federal government has evaluated the safety of food and beverage ingredients.

One-half (51%) of Americans believe the U.S. federal government has evaluated the safety of food and beverage ingredients. The other half (49%) of Americans are unsure or express doubt, with 25% saying they are "unsure." The remaining 24% do not believe the U.S. federal government has evaluated the safety of food ingredients.

Just over half of Americans are aware of the U.S. FDA GRAS program.

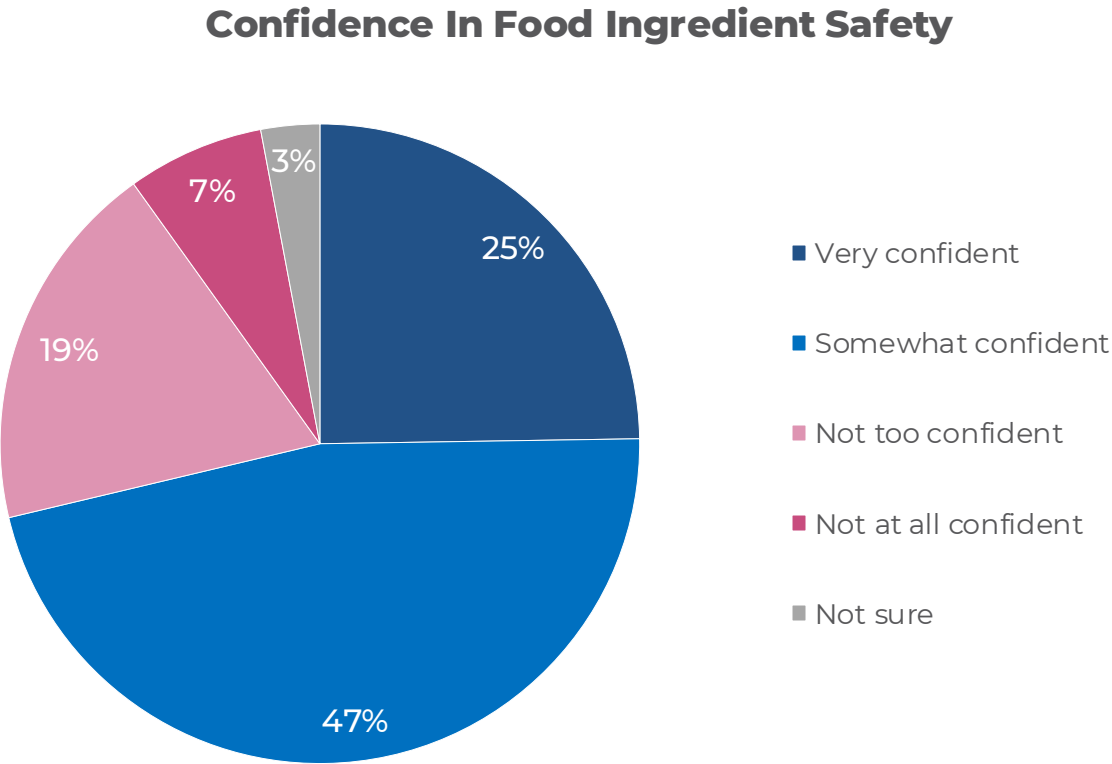
More than half of Americans (53%) say they have heard about the FDA GRAS program, while nearly half (47%) say they have not heard about it.

Among Americans who have heard of the U.S. FDA GRAS program, two in three believe it is effective.

Among those who say they have heard about the FDA GRAS program, 65% believe it is somewhat (40%) or very (25%) effective. One in ten (12%) are ambivalent about the effectiveness of the FDA GRAS program, and 16% believe it is somewhat (10%) or very (6%) ineffective.

More than seven in ten Americans are confident in the safety of the ingredients in the foods and beverages that they buy.

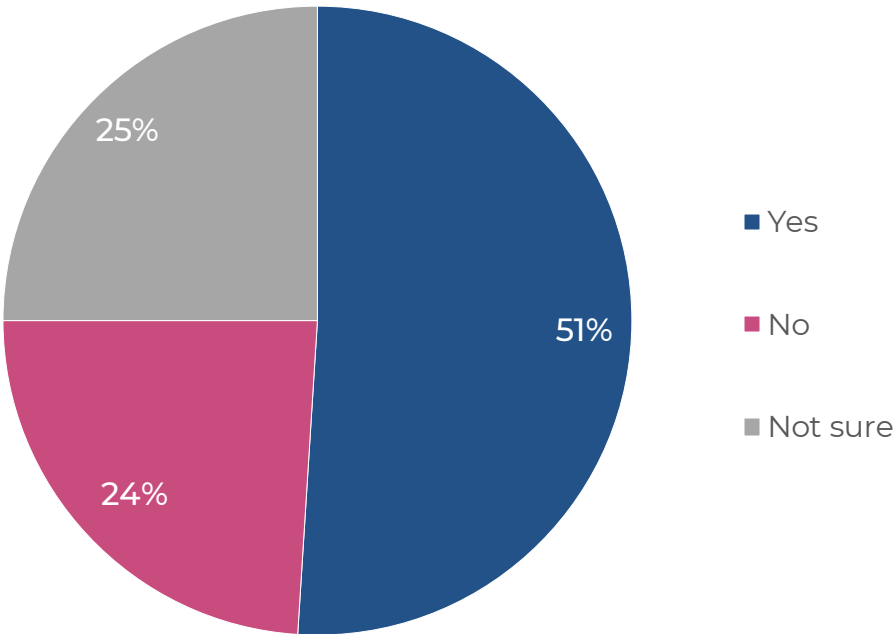
While 25% are very confident in the safety of the ingredients in the foods and beverages they buy, the majority (47%) are somewhat confident. One in four are not too confident (19%) or not at all confident (7%).



Americans are divided in their belief that the U.S. federal government has evaluated the safety of food and beverage ingredients.

Half of Americans are unsure (25%) or doubt (24%) if the U.S. federal government has evaluated food and beverage ingredient safety, and 51% believe it has.

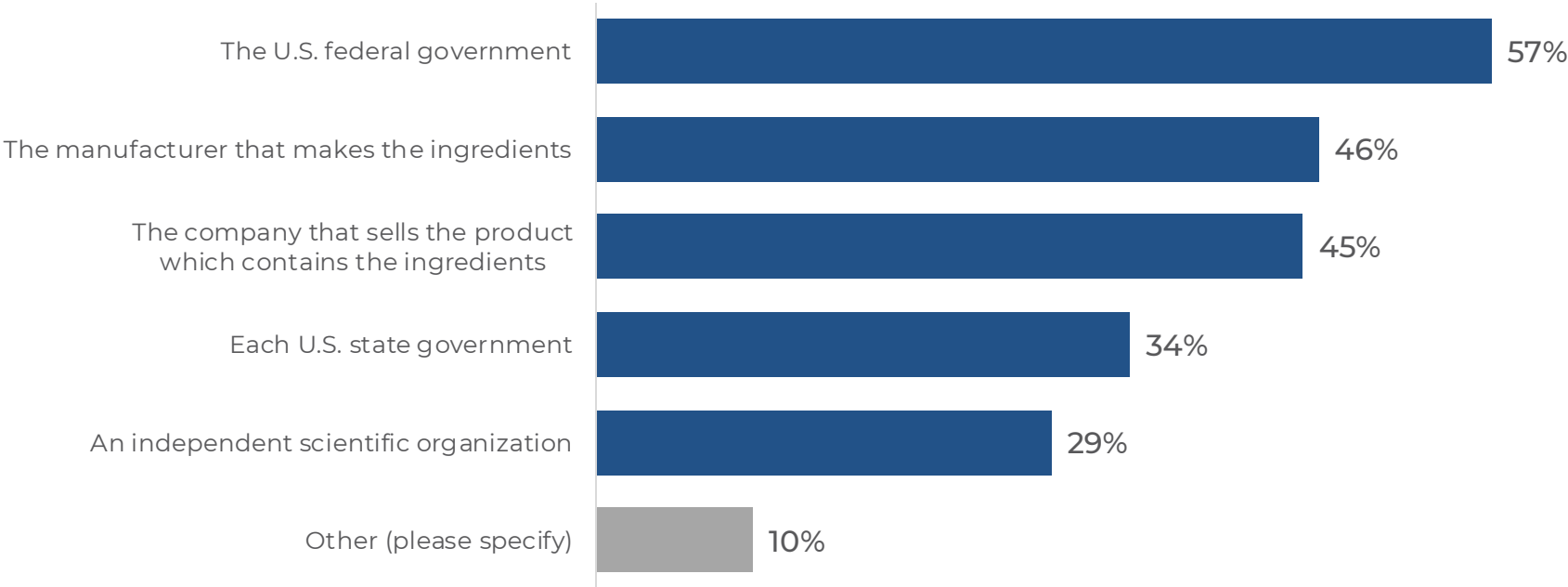
Belief That U.S. Federal Government Has Evaluated Food Ingredient Safety



Most Americans believe the federal government should be responsible for evaluating the safety of food ingredients.

While more than half of Americans (57%) believe the federal government should be responsible, slightly less than half also believe that ingredient manufacturers (46%) as well as food and beverage companies (45%) should be responsible. One in three (34%) believe that each U.S. state government should be responsible for the safety of food ingredients.

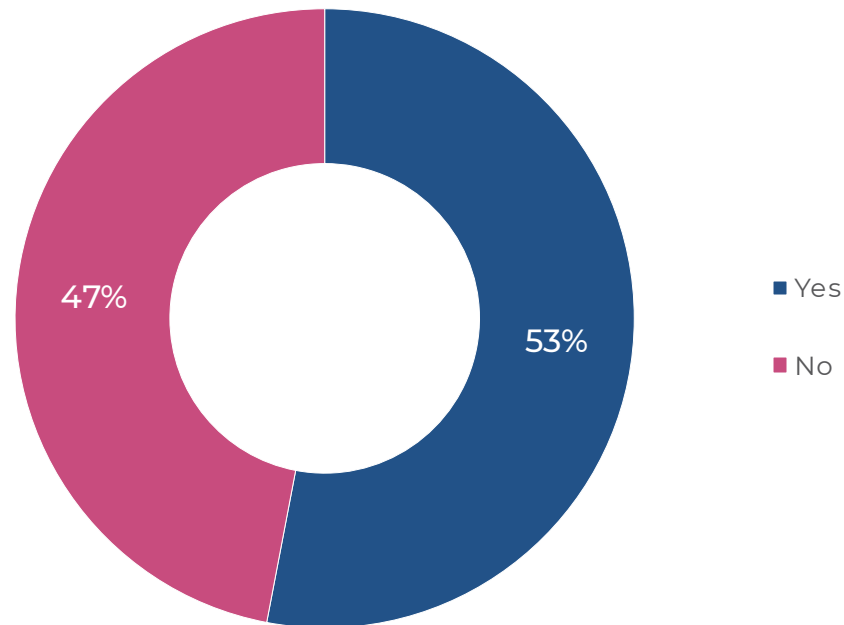
Who Americans Believe Is Responsible For Evaluating Food Ingredient Safety



Just over half of Americans are aware of the U.S. FDA GRAS program.

Nearly half (47%) of Americans have not heard of the FDA GRAS program to regulate food additives.

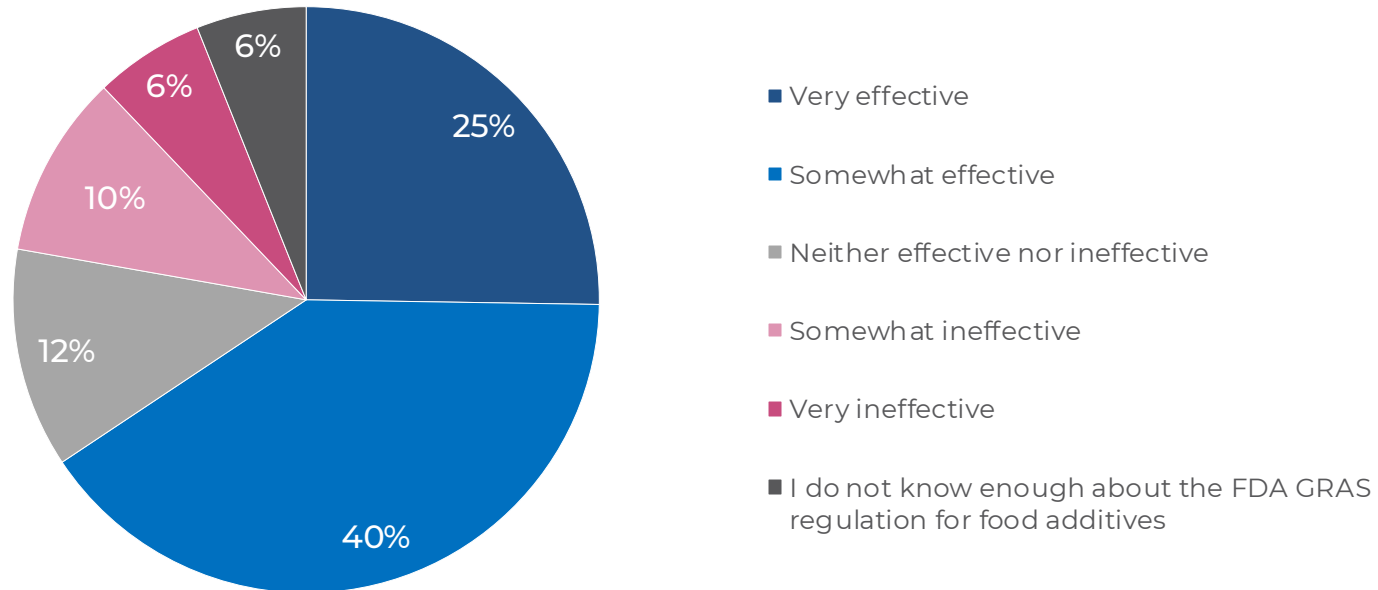
Awareness Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program



Among Americans who have heard of the U.S. FDA GRAS program, two in three believe it is effective.

Among Americans who have heard of the U.S. FDA GRAS program, 65% believe the FDA GRAS program is very (25%) or somewhat (40%) effective, while 16% see it as very (6%) or somewhat (10%) ineffective. The rest are unsure (12%) or do not know enough about it (6%).

Perceived Effectiveness Of The U.S. FDA GRAS Program





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