

Poll finds most Americans favor increased funding for stronger food safety oversight

May 19 2011

Among likely voters surveyed across the nation, 66 percent support additional funding for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to carry out new responsibilities related to food safety, according to a Pew-commissioned poll released today by the bipartisan team of Hart Research and American Viewpoint.

In addition, 74 percent feel it is worth a one-to-three percent increase in the cost of food to pay for new [safety measures](#) in the FDA [Food Safety Modernization Act](#), which became law this year. Further, 70 percent of those surveyed favor [food companies](#) paying an average annual fee of \$1,000 to help cover the cost of new FDA food safety activities.

The survey also shows that a quarter of Americans "worry a great deal" about food being contaminated with bacteria that makes it unsafe to eat. Overall, 85 percent say the government should be responsible for ensuring that food is safe to eat and 71 percent of voters feel the FDA plays a "very important" or "essential" role in protecting Americans' health and safety.

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act became law in January, strengthening the oversight authorities of the FDA. The legislation improves safety standards for food facilities and fresh produce, strengthens inspection requirements, boosts powers to help limit the dangers of food imports and provides the FDA with the power to issue a mandatory recall of [contaminated food](#), among other authorities.

"For too long the FDA, which is responsible for the safety of over 80 percent of the foods we eat, has not had adequate resources or power to protect Americans from dangers in the food supply," said Erik Olson, who directs food programs for the Pew Health Group. "This poll reflects a strong belief that Americans are willing to pay more to ensure that the FDA is protecting the safety of the food they put on their family's dinner table."

Those polled are widely in favor of the activities required under the new law. For example, 90 percent of voters favor requiring foreign countries that export food to the United States to certify that their requirements meet U.S. standards, and 86 percent support more FDA inspections of food facilities. Before the new law was enacted, the agency only examined about one percent of [food](#) imports and each facility received a visit from an FDA inspector on average once a decade.

Release of the survey comes as Congress is expected to consider legislation that will support the federal government for the next fiscal year.

The nationwide survey, conducted between April 28 and May 4, 2011, polled 1,015 likely voters reached on landline and mobile phones. The survey has a +/- 3.1 percent margin of error.

Provided by Pew Health Group

Citation: Poll finds most Americans favor increased funding for stronger food safety oversight (2011, May 19) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-poll-americans-favor-funding-stronger.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.