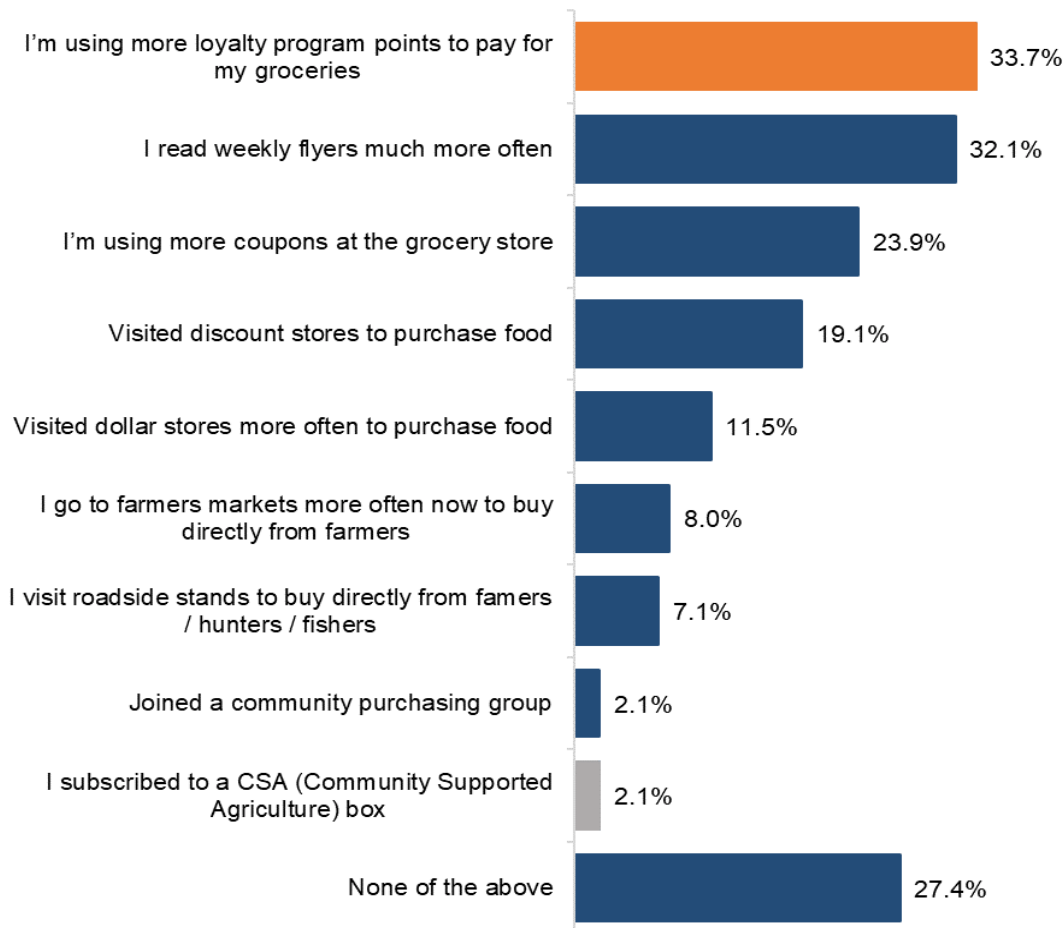




New report suggests almost three out of four Canadians have made significant changes to how they grocery shop due to higher food prices

HALIFAX, NS. (September 20, 2022) - Food inflation has impacted the lives of most Canadians in recent months. Canada's food inflation rate has been around 10% since May of this year.

In the last year, have you done any of the following for your food / grocery shopping? (Please select all that apply)



Statistics Canada just announced that the food inflation rate for retail was 10.8% and at 7.4% in food service. Canadians have been trying to cope with higher food and menu prices in many ways. The **Agri-Food Analytics Lab**, in partnership with **Caddle**, investigated what Canadian consumers are doing to deal with higher food prices in the last year and are releasing the results of the study.

AGRI-FOOD ANALYTICS LAB/LABORATOIRE DE SCIENCES ANALYTIQUES EN AGROALIMENTAIRE

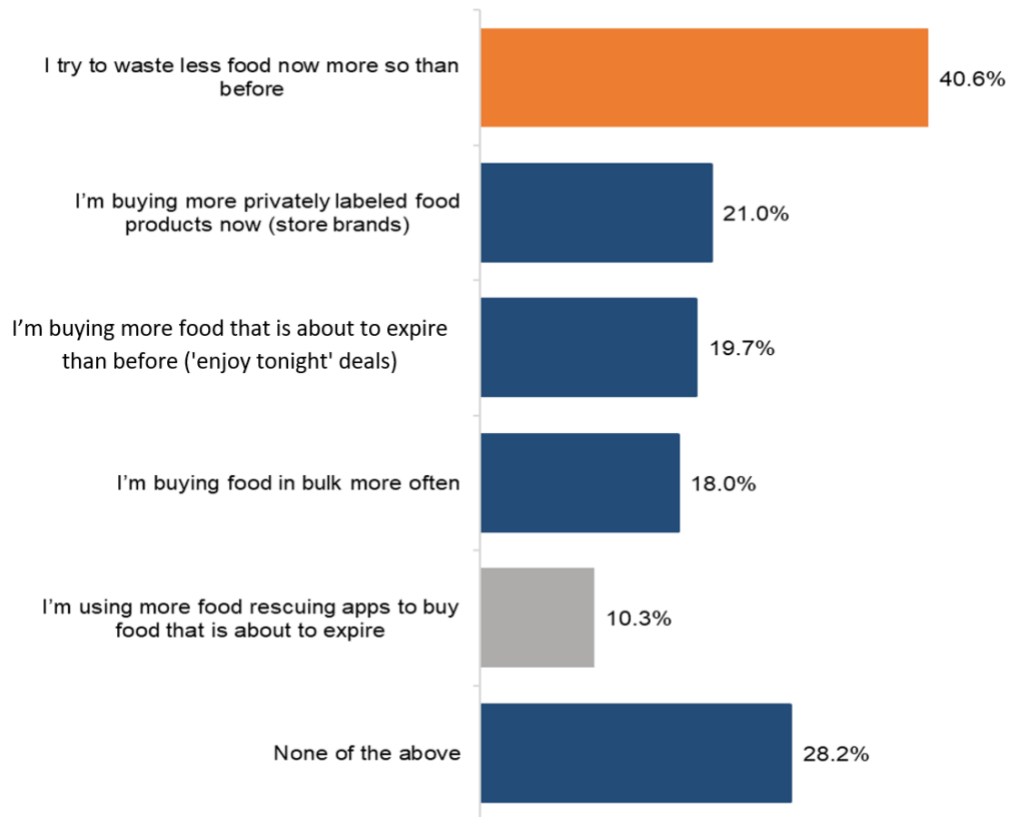
<https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>



In total, 5,000 Canadians were consulted between September 8 and September 10, 2022, for this cross-national survey.

The investigation first looked at decisions which could lead to lifestyle changes in the last year. While a total of 18,1% of Canadians are focusing more on their health and nutrition, 12.4% claimed that they have moved just in the last year. A total of 12.0% of Canadians have changed jobs and 9.3% started to exercise. A total of 7.1% of Canadians became new pet owners as well.

In the last year, have you done any of the following for your food / groceries? (Please select all that apply)



One way to deal with higher food prices would be to produce food domestically. The survey looked at whether Canadians were growing or making their own food because of higher food prices. A total of 15.5% of Canadians have started **growing their own food**, just in the last year. **Ontario** is where the highest percentage of people started to **grow their own food**, at 17.4%, followed by **British Columbia** at 16.2%. The **Atlantic** (15.2%), **Quebec** (13.7%), and the **Prairies** (13.1%) were next. While a total of 6.2% of Canadians use **hydroponics** at home to grow food, 4.5% claim they **have livestock** at home now, and didn't 12 months ago.



The survey also looked at newly adopted shopping habits. While 8.0% of Canadians changed their primary grocery store where they buy most of their food, 12.9% of Canadians have started to visit more than one store in the last 12 months. Canadians are also more active online.

While 17.1% of Canadians **have ordered food online for curbside pick-up**, 12.2% of Canadians have ordered food online for delivery in the last 12 months. While we know that buying online is typically more expensive due to fees, we did not ask people why they were ordering online and for what purpose. Another option available online are meal kits. In the last 12 months, only 7.4% of Canadians have ordered **meal kits**, which is far below our last survey on the topic. In May 2022, 8.4% of Canadians were subscribed to a meal kit service provider, which was down from 12.8% in November 2020. This is likely due to meal kits being perceived as more expensive options for consumers.

The last portion of the survey looked at **cost-saving mechanisms consumers** have chosen to adopt to deal with higher food prices. The most popular grocery shopping habit change we measured was that many Canadians have used **loyalty program points**. A total of 33.7% are using loyalty program points to pay for groceries in the last 12 months. The second option is **weekly flyers** (32.1%), followed by **using coupons**, at 23.9%.

While 19.1% of Canadians **have visited discount stores** in the last 12 months, 11.5% of Canadians have visited **dollar stores** more often to purchase food. A total of 8.0% are visiting **farmers markets** more often, and 7.1% of consumers **visited roadside stands** to buy directly from farmers in the last year.

“It appears Canadians are proactively seeking different ways to save at the grocery store,” said **Dr. Sylvain Charlebois**, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab. “Options were always there, but inflation just made many options, like loyalty programs and coupons, more attractive,” Charlebois said, referring to the Lab’s survey results.

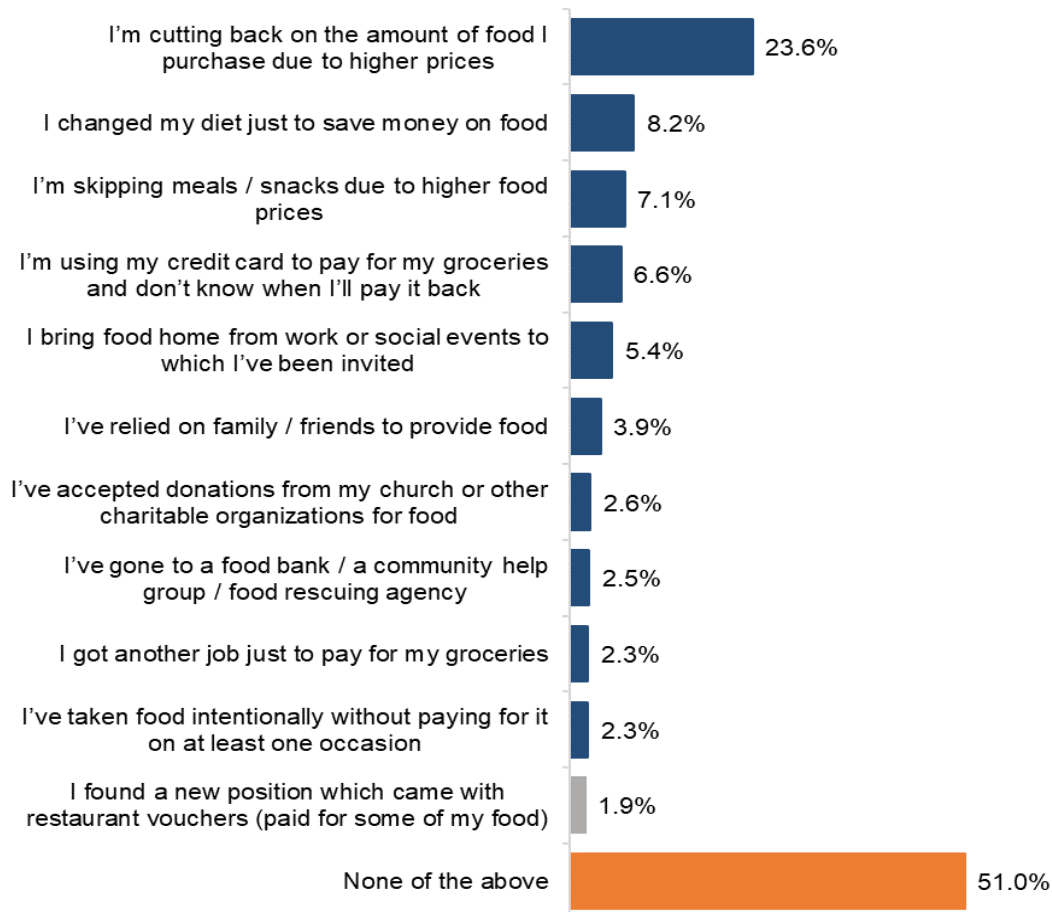
The study also looked at other specific strategies, such as waste reduction and private (store) labels. The results were interesting. A total of 40.6% of Canadians are trying to **waste less food now, much more than 12 months ago**.

Going for **privately labelled food products** is also getting more popular. A total of 21.0% of Canadians are opting for store labels, which are less expensive most of the time. The **Atlantic** region is where the highest percentage of consumers are now opting for privately labelled products, at 27.8%, followed by **Quebec** at 22.5%. Also, 19.7% of Canadians are buying more food that is about to expire. The **Atlantic** has the highest percentage of consumers buying food that is about to expire at 29.1%, followed by the **Prairies** at 19.5%. In total, **we estimate that about three Canadians in four have made changes to how they buy food in the last 12 months to deal with food inflation**.



“Seeing food waste reduction as the number one thing consumers are doing to cut costs is encouraging,” said **Janet Music**, co-author of the report. “Consumers appear to see food waste reduction as a form of incentive, and not just a way to adopt a more sustainable way of life.”

**During the past year, have you done any of the following?
(Please select all that apply)**



Questions did also measure a darker side of compromises being made by consumers these days. Almost 24% of Canadians are now cutting back on the amount of food they purchase due to higher food inflation. **Female** consumers who opt to cut back on the amount of food outnumber **men** who opt to do the same, that is, 29.6% versus 18.0%. **Dietary changes** have been made by 8.2% just to save money. While a total of 7.1% are **skipping meals now**, 6.6% of Canadians are **paying for their groceries with a credit card without knowing when they will be able to pay it back**. Other measures are also followed by Canadians.



Download the preliminary results of the survey in English and French at <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agrifood.html>.

Contacts

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Director

Agri-Food Analytics Lab, Dalhousie University

sylvain.charlebois@dal.ca

Janet Music, Research Program Coordinator

Agri-Food Analytics Lab, Dalhousie University

janet.music@dal.ca

Methodology for survey: Caddle is one of the most credible active panels in the Canadian market. A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in September 2022, in partnership with Caddle. 5,000 Canadians participated in this survey. Margin of Error: +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Disclosure: Funding for the survey was provided by Caddle and Dalhousie University.