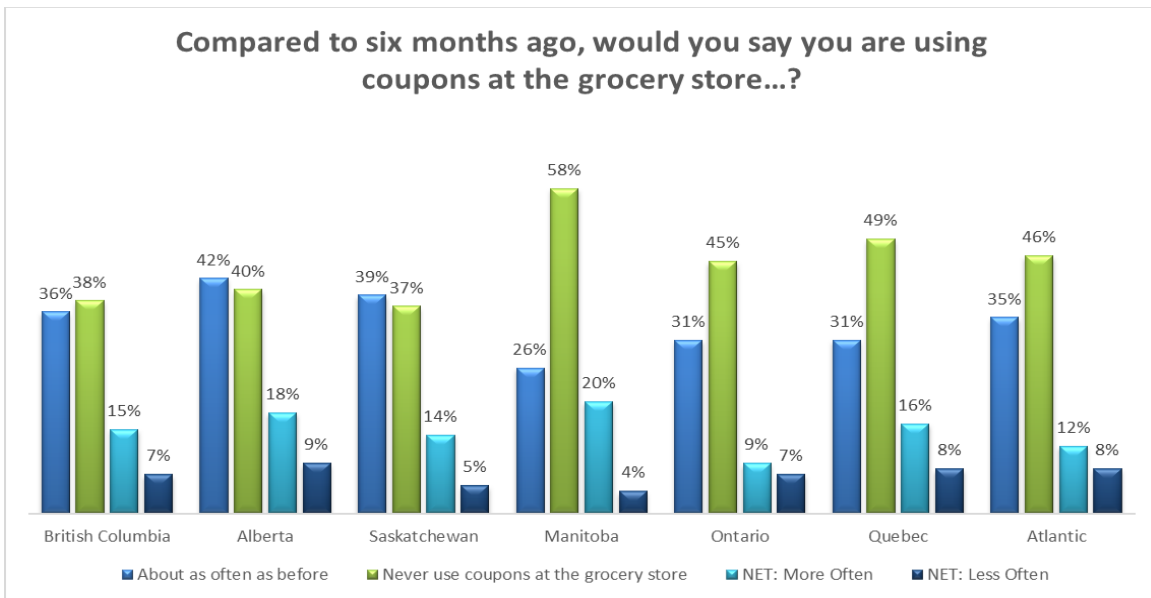


New report suggests most Canadians would use more coupons at the grocery store if more were available or useable

HALIFAX, N.S. (March 22, 2022) – With higher food prices, a growing number of consumers are looking for new ways to save. Reading weekly flyers, using coupons, taking advantage of volume discounting, and using food rescuing apps are some of the methods Canadians are using to save at the grocery store. This report looks specifically at how Canadians feel about some opportunities grocers offer to save while at the grocery store. The **Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University**, in partnership with **Angus Reid**, conducted a study on couponing, volume discounting and other methods used by the food industry. A total of 1501 Canadians from across the country were surveyed in March 2022.

The recent use of coupons was a principal focus of this survey. Compared to six months ago, while **45% of Canadians have never used coupons before, 15% of Canadians are using coupons more often now**. Of Canadians who were already using coupons, 11% are using them more often. Given that food prices are rising at an unprecedented rate, that percentage is lower than expected.



About 33% of Canadians are using coupons the same way as six months ago. It is in the province of **Manitoba** where the highest percentage of consumers are using coupons more often now, at 20%, followed by **Alberta** at 18%. The lowest rates are in **Ontario** at 9%, and the **Atlantic**, at 12%. About 16% of **Quebecers** are using coupons more often than six months ago. **Consumers under 35** are more than twice as likely to have increased their use of coupons compared with consumers who are 55 and over. Only 9% of consumers 55 and over have increased their use of coupons in the last six months.

People who earn **less than \$50k a year** are using coupons more often than those who earn more, but not by much. About 18% of consumers earning less than \$50k are using coupons more often compared with 14% for consumers earning more.

If coupons were more available, 68% of Canadians would use them more often. Clearly, Canadians want to use them more often, but some barriers remain. The report also looked at why consumers are not using coupons more often. A total of **49% of Canadians feel most coupons have too many restrictions**. In most cases, for example, coupon stacking – using more than one coupon on one item – is not allowed or can only be used certain days. And often, coupons cannot be used for already discounted food items. A total of **45% of Canadians feel the savings from most grocery store coupons are not worth the effort**.

“Canadians either feel using coupons has too many restrictions in Canada, or that savings are not that interesting for them,” said **Dr. Sylvain Charlebois**, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab. “The couponing culture in Canada is undeveloped which doesn’t give consumers more opportunities to save when food prices are rising.”



The inconvenience of using coupons at the store appears to still be a barrier. A total of 38% do not like using coupons at the grocery store because it **holds up the line at the check-out**.

Volume discounting appears to be popular with Canadians, but the practice raises questions about fairness and ethics. While a total of 73% of Canadians try to take advantage of volume discounts (i.e., buying products in bulk or larger quantities to save money) most of the time, 54% feel volume discounts **are unfair to smaller households/single people**. What’s more, a total of 47% feel volume discounts lead to more **food waste**.

“Canadians appear to have a love-hate relationship with volume discounts,” remarked **Janet Music**, Research Assistant at the Lab. “The practice does raise the issue of socio-economic equality and fairness for consumers.”

The report also looked at **dynamic pricing**, which is varying prices for products in real-time based on consumer demand. It’s a practice that is growing in popularity around the world. Only 35% of Canadians like the idea of dynamic pricing, so the practice is either unpopular or not well-known to Canadians.

End of report.

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

Contacts

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: A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in March 2022, in partnership with Angus Reid. The survey was conducted online. 1,501 valid responses were collected.

Margin of Error: +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Disclosure: Funding for this survey was provided by **Angus Reid** and **Dalhousie University**.