

# BCAC 2021 Consumer Research: Key Findings

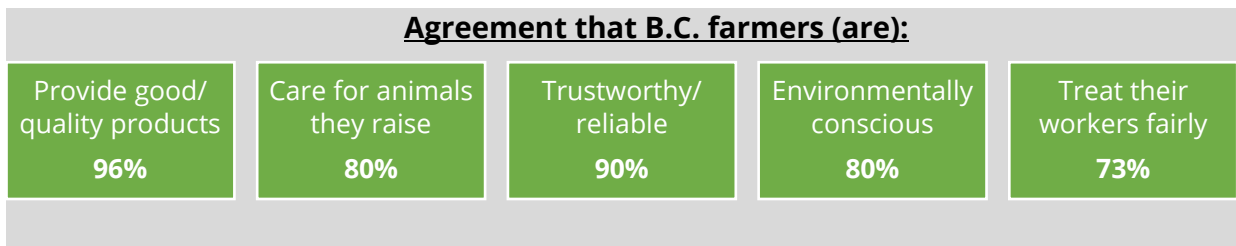
## BACKGROUND

Strengthening public trust and engaging with consumers is a priority initiative for BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) and its members. Since 2018, BCAC has conducted consumer research to better understand the perceptions British Columbians have about the food system. The latest survey results are based on an online study conducted May 12 to 15, 2021 among a representative sample of 831 residents across B.C. The margin of error is +/- 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. British Columbians continue to have very positive views of B.C. farmers.

Opinions of B.C. farmers have seen some slight strengthening over the last three years. Agreement that B.C. farmers treat their workers fairly has returned close to the 2018 benchmark level of 71%. Otherwise, any gains made in 2020 have been largely kept in 2021.



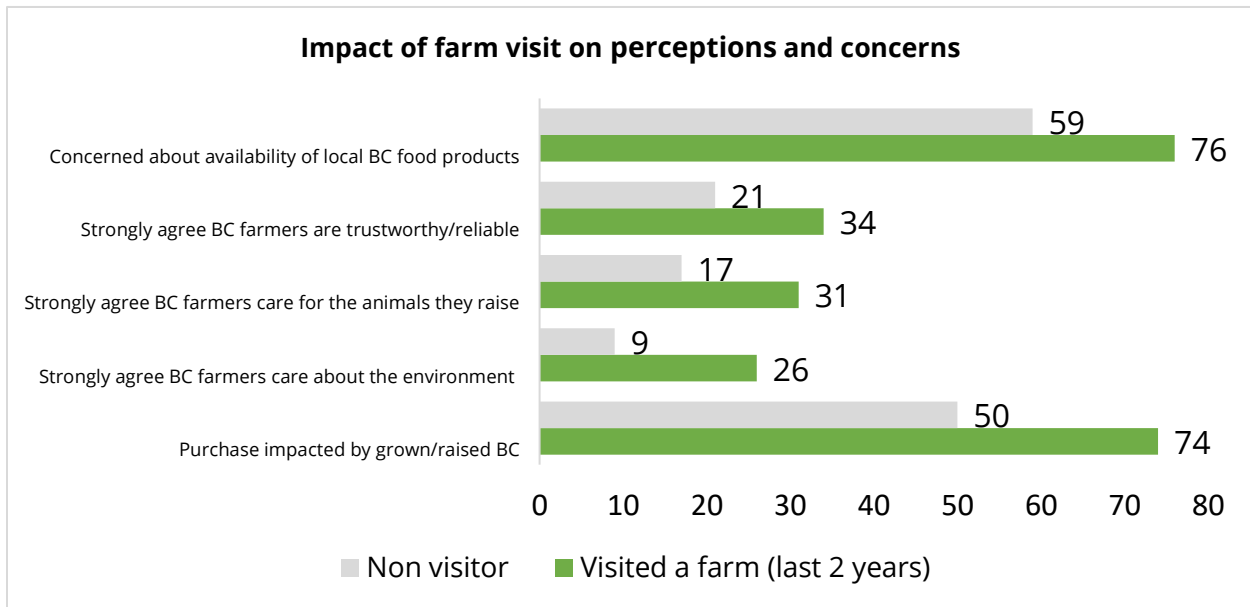
### 2. Local origin (B.C.) and certification are important to a vast majority of shoppers and can largely impact the purchasing decision for many.

While quality, availability and affordability are most influential in terms of what fresh products British Columbians buy, being local and certified are also very relevant decision criteria for a large majority.



### 3. British Columbians who have recently visited a working farm are more likely to be impacted by local origin and have more positive opinions of B.C. farmers.

The 2021 research shows that interactions with farmers are associated with more positive views of the food system. Those who visit a working farm in-person are more likely to have a positive view of farmers, higher concern (care) levels about the food system, and value local and farm-related attributes when buying fresh products.



### 4. Food system issues remain important to British Columbians.

Between 2018 and 2020 there was a softening of concern in several areas. Given the timing, it is likely that the newly emerging COVID-19 pandemic was having an impact; British Columbians were focused on other issues in general.

In 2021 total levels of concern for several areas are higher now than in the benchmark from 2018. Data from other questions suggests that consumers' level of 'concern' can be interpreted as 'caring about'. The latest data shows that there is a growing appreciation for the importance of agriculture and the food system in B.C.

#### Higher concern 2021 vs. 2018:

- Ensuring healthy food is affordable
- Rising cost of food in general
- Food safety
- Humane treatment of animals
- Availability of local B.C. food products
- Availability of food in remote regions of B.C.
- Having enough food to feed B.C.'s population