

2023-2024

# NATIONAL CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT



[canadianfoodfocus.org](http://canadianfoodfocus.org)



# MANAGING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At Canadian Food Focus (CFF), we pride ourselves on doing things differently. From its inception, CFF has been a consumer-focused initiative, designed to address the beliefs, questions, and concerns Canadians have about food production. This unique approach is driven by a simple truth: food is personal. It's emotional. It's a profound part of who we are, connecting us to our history, our social conscience, our values and to each other.

CFF recognizes that the key to building trust is not just through science-based, factual messaging—though that remains critical. The other essential component is creating content that truly resonates with consumers. Through our deep understanding of consumer behaviors, belief systems, and values, we ensure that our content aligns with the personal and emotional connections people have with food. This alignment is achieved through extensive research, data analysis, social listening, and interpreting information like the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity's annual survey and other tools. We're not just providing information; we're answering the questions Canadians are asking and addressing the topics they care about most.

Since our launch in 2019, CFF has become a trusted resource for Canadians seeking answers about food production. Our reach has grown significantly, increasing by 273% since inception, with over 32,000 followers by September 2024. Each month, our platform generates 2.5 to 4 million impressions and engages 500,000 to 800,000 users. This year alone, our total engagements grew by 28%, and our newsletter subscriber list tripled, achieving an open rate of 52% (nearly double the industry average).

These numbers tell a compelling story, but the real impact lies in how we're transforming the way urban consumers view food production. CFF is proving that a national engagement strategy representing the entire agriculture industry can build public trust. Through over 1,000 articles, 500 videos, 7,000+ social media posts, and a growing library of online courses, CFF is establishing itself as an unbiased and reliable resource for Canadians.

This year, we expanded our influencer outreach through impactful events and collaborations. From co-hosting farm tours for chefs, dietitians and government staff to presenting webinars for dietitians and health professionals, we've connected directly with influential audiences. Our Saskatoon Farm and Food Tour in July 2024 was a standout success, shifting participants' sentiments about agriculture and fostering new relationships with food influencers.

Looking ahead, CFF will continue to strengthen its role as a trusted voice in the national conversation about food and agriculture. Our focus remains on connecting Canadians with factual, relatable, and engaging content—helping them build confidence in their food choices while bridging the gap between farm and fork.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we're shaping the future of food literacy and trust in Canada.



*Dorothy Long,  
Managing Director*

# CANADIAN FOOD FOCUS GOALS



Engage Canadians to Build confidence in Canadian Food and Farming



Increase Food Literacy of Canadians from Fork-to-Farm



Cultivate Food and Farm Influencer through Education and Outreach

## How does CFF engage consumers?



# Consumer Engagement



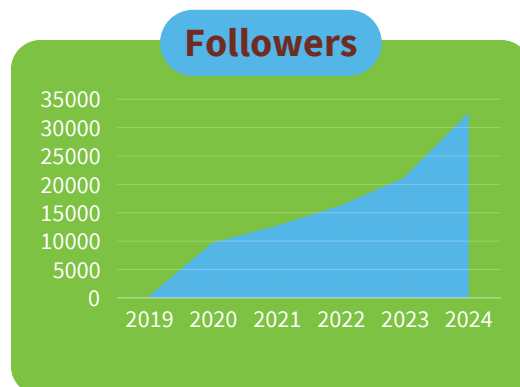
“ Canadian Food Focus is in the unique position of being able to transcend commodities and issues. Consumers see Canadian Food Focus as a credible source of information on food and farming. They’re not in the business of selling any one commodity or product, but in the business of educating the public about where their food comes from. In an age where the need for public trust is even more critical than ever, Canadian Food Focus is providing a valuable service to the agricultural industry from coast to coast. ”

– Erin O’Hara, Vice-President, Communications & Member Services, CropLife Canada

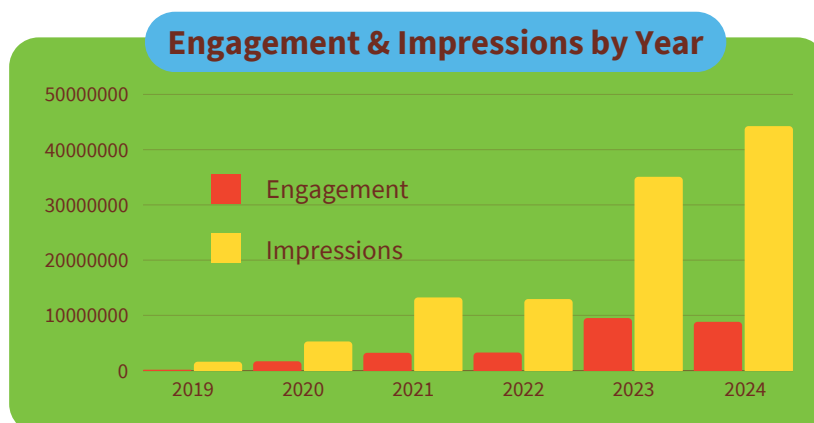
Canadian Food Focus is built around consumers’ interest in food, which is the most intimate way that most Canadians will interact with agriculture. We share content that answers consumer questions about food and farming, current topics and what foods are grown in Canada. We do this through our website, social media posts, videos, presentations, farm tours and trade shows.

## Over the last fiscal year, Canadian Food has achieved the following:

- Posted 80 new articles (includes both English and French content)
- Developed 27 new videos and 119 reels
- Posted 12 Podcasts
- Attained 52 million impressions
- Recorded 9.2 million engagements
- Acquired 10,776 new followers

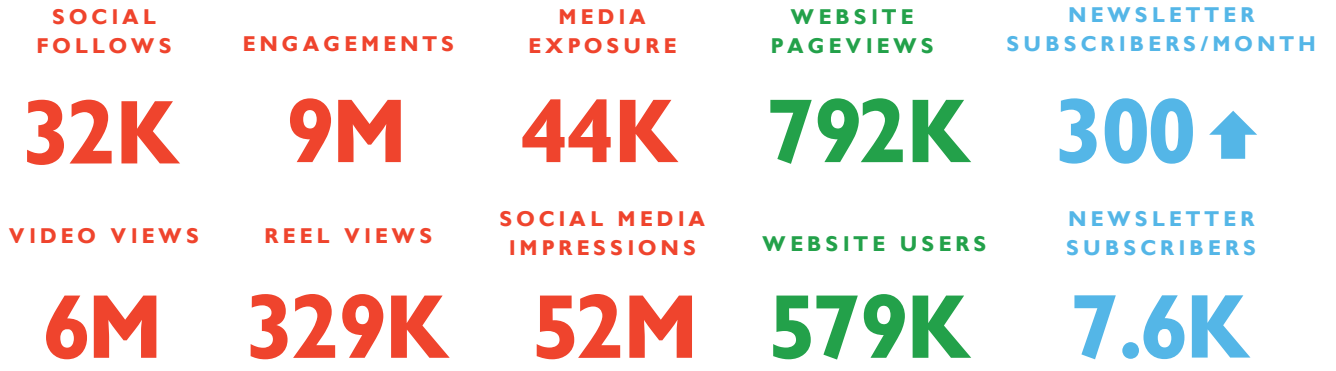


In addition to articles, videos, podcasts and reels, Canadian Food Focus also offers several online courses: 8 Learn To Cook courses and 10 Farm-to-Table courses. In March, we added instructor guides and participant quizzes for our online farm-to-table courses. This resource provides more utility for community courses, new Canadians and others looking for ‘Cole’s Notes’ on different agriculture sectors.



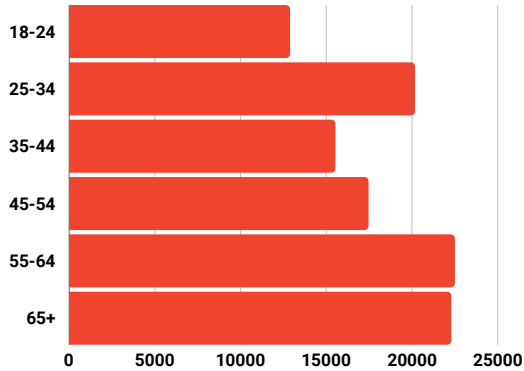
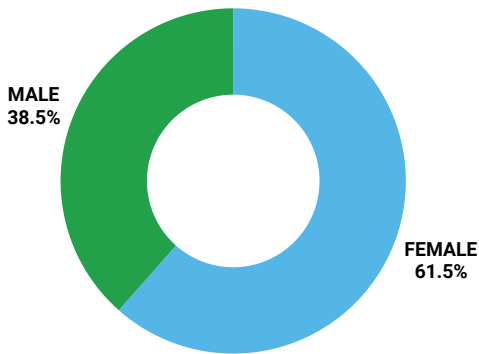
# Key Metrics

## October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024



### Canadian Food Focus Website

Audience by Gender, Age, City



### Top 10 Cities

Toronto and area  
Hamilton | Kitchener  
Calgary | Vancouver  
Montreal | Edmonton  
Winnipeg | Ottawa  
London | Halifax



2.4% increase in positive sentiment in the last year

### Website Content



**1K+**

ARTICLES



**500+**

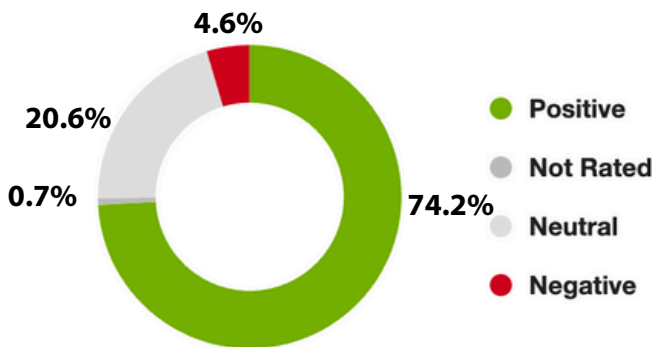
VIDEOS



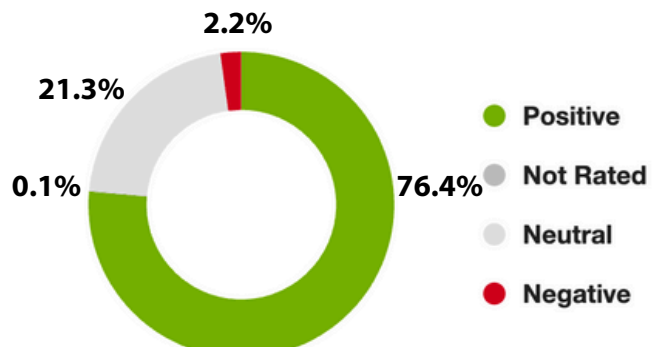
**25**

COURSES

### CFF Overall Sentiment Comparison



January 1- December 31, 2023



January 1- September 30, 2024

# Food Influencer Outreach & Partner Farm Tours



In addition to online outreach to individual consumers, we also work with “influencers”. These are people like dietitians, chefs, food writers, educators and policymakers—those who have an impact on others’ food choices. Canadian Food Focus provides farm tours, presentations and webinars to answer questions and establish ourselves as a resource for professional development for this group.

## CFF outreach activities during this period include:

- Hosted a farm tour of culinary students with Taste Canada and Canada Beef in the Toronto area in October 2023
- Partnered with CropLife Canada to promote webinar “Fake News: Fighting Misinformation in the Media” with registered dietitian Erin MacGregor in October 2023
- Webinar for dietitians and health professionals: “Misinformation and Disinformation in Nutrition Practice”, March 21, 2024 (joint presentation with FFC Ontario)
- Farm tour, trade show exhibit and panel discussion at Canadian Culinary Federation conference in Edmonton, AB, May 23-25, 2024 (partnership with Canada Beef)
- Farm tour and trade show exhibit at International Congress of Nutrition and Dietetics, Toronto, ON, June 12-15 (partnership with CropLife Canada and FFC Ontario)
- Co-hosted Incoming Mission to Saskatoon, SK, July 9-11, 2024
- Partner for Food Day Canada online campaign August 3, 2024



**WEBINAR**  
**Misinformation and Disinformation in Food Science and Nutrition: Impact on Practice**

**MARCH 21 AT 100 P.M. ET**

In an era where food and nutrition discussions permeate our everyday lives, it is crucial to address the challenges posed by misinformation and disinformation. This webinar will explore the impact of these issues on the profession of nutrition and food science, highlighting the importance of evidence-based practice.

**CONNIE DIEKMANN**  
 Connie Diekmann, M.Ed., B.Sc., is a Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist with over 20 years of experience. She is currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of Regina and a past president of the Canadian Dietetic Association.

**CAMI RYAN**  
 Cami Ryan, PhD, is Senior Business Director for the National Alliance for Food and Nutrition Policy. She is also a past president of the Canadian Dietetic Association and a past president of the International Association of Agricultural and Applied Nutritionists.

**WEBINAR**  
 FROM THE CROPLIFE CANADA WEBINAR ARCHIVES  
**FAKE NEWS: MISINFORMATION IN THE MEDIA**

The fight against misinformation and disinformation is real, especially when it comes to the topics of food and nutrition.

Join registered dietitian Erin MacGregor for this free 1-hour webinar to celebrate Health Literacy Week.

Nutrition professionals will learn:

- What misinformation is and why it's a problem.
- Tactics used by misinformers to spread bad ideas and information online.
- Concrete ways to stop the spread of misinformation and help patients and clients do the same.

Watch the archived webinar here  
 Password: a78dUeM

We look forward to connecting more with you in the near future with some new content!



## Great Food Grown Here Newsletter



**What's in Season? Saskatoon Berries**

The name “saskatoon” comes from the Cree word *misâskwatômina* (mis-sack-qua-too-mina), which means “the fruit of the tree of many branches.” The berry also shares its name with the largest city in Saskatchewan.

### #loveCDNfood



**Canadian-grown foods are key ingredients in food hampers**

With rising housing costs, inflation and the trickle-down effects of Covid-19, including job losses and work stoppages, Canadians more than ever are relying on food banks to feed their families. According to Food Banks of Canada, visits to Canadian food banks rose over 20% from March 2019 to March 2021.

**Antibiotics in food: should you be concerned?**

Short answer: No. Health Canada recognizes that a safe food supply is critical for the health of Canadians and they highly regulate the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture to protect human and animal health. Health Canada also sets strict requirements on the proper use of antibiotics and defines a withdrawal period.

**Newsletter Open Rates**

**52%** **great food grown here.**

Industry Average **27%**

**300 +**

**new subscribers each month**

### #loveCDNfarms

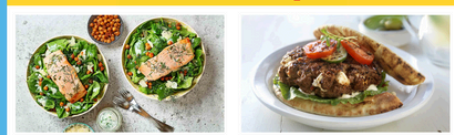
**Raising fish in Canada to meet growing demand**

Seafood consumption is surging globally and as this demand rises, traditional capture fisheries cannot meet the needs. As a result, aquaculture (the farming of fish, shellfish and marine plants) is starting to play an increasing role in supplying the world with seafood.

**What is regenerative farming?**

Regenerative agriculture is a farming practice that combines components from both organic and conventional farming. The *Real Dirt on Farming* defines the key principle of regenerative farming as striving to improve soil health over time—something both conventional and organic farmers are also committed to.

### #loveCDNrecipes



“I enjoy your newsletter so much and find that your website is a wealth of information!”

– CFF Facebook Follower

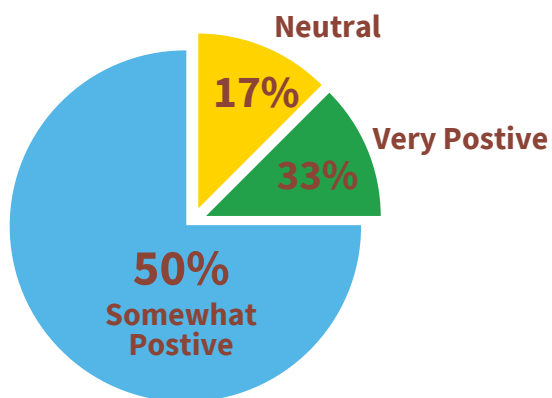


From July 9-11, Canadian Food Focus welcomed 13 guests from across Canada—including food writers, chefs, policy makers, bloggers, dietitians, and educators—for a special agricultural tour. Hosted alongside our farmer hosts, industry representatives and FFC SK staff, the experience offered an in-depth look at Canadian farming and food production.

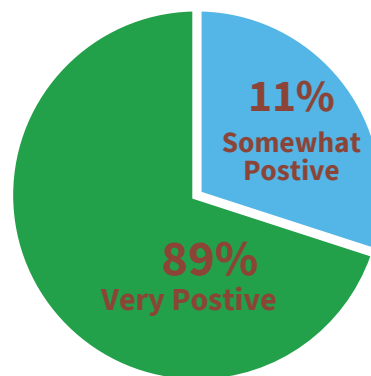
For over a third of our guests, this was one of their first hands-on experiences with farming. Most had visited fewer than three farms in their lifetime. The tour focused on topics like sustainable farming practices, animal welfare, pesticide use, and corporate influence in agriculture—key areas our guests were eager to explore.



The impact of the tour was clear. Pre- and post-tour surveys showed a significant shift in participants' perceptions of farming in Canada.



**Before the tour**



**After the tour**

The hands-on, interactive nature of the tour was a highlight for attendees. From riding in farm equipment, inspecting lentil plants, chewing wheat seeds, petting calves and handling equipment like ear taggers—guests were fully immersed in the farming experience. Here’s what participants had to say:

*“I loved interacting with the cows, seeing the egg sorting, and chatting with farmers.”*

*“The best part was meeting and hearing from farmers about their areas of expertise. Their stories were fascinating and so engaging.”*

*“I would have loved an extra day. I cannot wait to share my experience with colleagues when I get home.”*

This tour was an important step in building strong relationships with food influencers. Many attendees have since reached out to continue the conversation, ask additional questions, and collaborate on future projects—a promising result as we work to foster greater understanding and engagement around Canadian agriculture.

# Collaborations & Communications



## Short Video Series

This video series features Tiffany Martinka and her family who raise chickens and crops on their farm in northeast Saskatchewan. The project is a collaboration with Aspen Films, the Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan and with support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. See <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/U1Hm2UXF3u4>

The 6 reel series shows the importance of animal welfare, biosecurity and family farming but more through the lens of shared consumer values.

## Farmers Have A Story To Tell

CFF completed a project with Saskatchewan's Nathan Jones to create a video emphasizing the importance for the ag sector to engage with consumers and how Canadian Food Focus is achieving this. The videos feature footage from the farms of Jake Leguee and Erika & Cyle Stewart.



*To engage more Canadians, the ag sector needs to come together to share our stories and get to the heart of consumer interests and questions about food and farming,*

Dorothy Long, Managing Director of Canadian Food Focus



Jake Leguee:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NwM0fl3Fi4>



Erika Stewart:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkFB5jW4glg>

## Best Practices

National Consumer Engagement Working Group, co-chaired by Dorothy Long, developed a set of guidelines 'Best Practices for Consumer Engagement' and a communications plan to be shared with public trust groups across Canada.

The release of the Guide to Best Practices for Consumer Engagement marks an important step forward for the agriculture and agri-food industry. By focusing on shared values, storytelling, and risk communication, the industry can foster deeper connections with consumers and build lasting public trust.



**Best Practices**  
for Consumer Engagement  
in Agriculture and Agri-Food

2024

## Advertising Campaign

CFF embarked on a programmatic online campaign through Bell Media in January. Programmatic ads use artificial intelligence and machine learning so that our ads appear in real time to specifically targeted audiences. See ad here:

<https://review.bellmedia.ca/view/752632252>

This campaign was supported in part through our SCAP funding.



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2023 - 2024**

**@CDNFoodFocus**