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## **Consumer Survey: Rising Cost of Food Rates High on List of Consumer Concerns**

**INDIANAPOLIS** (Oct. 9, 2008) – When Darla Leatherman shops for groceries these days, she sometimes stops and asks herself, “How did the bill get so high?” She’s not alone. New research shows the rising cost of food is among the three greatest consumer concerns in the United States today.

The Center for Food Integrity surveyed more than 2,000 consumers and asked them to rate their level of concern on a variety of issues. Respondents indicated they were “very concerned” about not only rising food costs but rising energy costs and the state of the U.S. economy. The survey showed 60 percent of the respondents are more concerned about food prices today than they were a year ago.

Debi Alexander said she’s noticed the impact of higher food prices on her family’s budget. The stay-at-home mother of two says the situation is impacting her purchasing decisions.

“Will we really eat that?” Alexander said she asks herself while grocery shopping. “I might go for a bag of frozen food instead of fresh because I know it’s not going to go to waste.”

Leatherman and Alexander, both of Indianapolis, mention such things as using coupons, keeping a lookout for sales, purchasing less expensive cuts of meat and trying to skip unnecessary trips to the grocery store as ways to cut corners.

“I believe this is the highest level of concern about the cost of food that we’ve seen in some time, certainly since World War II,” said Charlie Arnot, the chief executive officer of CFI. “The food system must address these concerns to maintain consumer trust and confidence in our ability to provide the safe, abundant and affordable food consumers expect.”

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To accomplish this, Arnot believes the food system must engage in dialogue with stakeholders along every step of the food system, including farmers, food companies, processors, retailers, restaurants, consumers, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

“The key to a sustainable food system is balance,” Arnot said. “Our organization believes that sustainability includes practices that are ethically grounded, scientifically verified and economically viable. When those three elements operate in balance, and we establish proactive and beneficial dialogue up and down the chain, our food system can be supported by stakeholders and operate successfully.”

Additional results from CFI’s survey related to personal finance, the economy and the food system include:

- 47 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement “*With the increase in food prices, we tend to eat out less than one year ago.*”
- 39 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement “*With the increase in food prices, I am more likely to buy less expensive cuts of meat.*”
- 36 percent of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement “*With the increase in food prices, I buy more canned fruits and vegetables instead of fresh.*”
- 23 percent strongly agreed that U.S. food is amongst the most affordable in the world today.

For a complete summary of the research results, contact Jim Fallon, Center for Food Integrity, at (913) 461-3475, or via email at [jim.fallon@foodintegrity.org](mailto:jim.fallon@foodintegrity.org).

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The Center for Food Integrity is a not-for-profit corporation established to build consumer trust and confidence in the contemporary U.S. food system. Our members, who represent every segment of the food system, are committed to providing accurate information and addressing important issues among all food system stakeholders. The Center does not lobby or advocate for individual food companies or brands. For more information, visit [www.foodintegrity.org](http://www.foodintegrity.org).