

Food Ethics Council, UK

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Three-quarters of public want consistent animal and environmental standards across all the dairy products they buy, reveals poll**

More than three-quarters of the UK public want animal welfare and environmental standards relating to dairy products and ingredients to be at least as high as standards for fresh milk, according to a recent poll.

Standards on ingredients and processed foods are often lower than less processed versions. The industry is complicit in the myth that the further removed a product is from the animal, then the less people care about its environmental footprint or how the animal was reared.

But the poll results show the public do care and want equivalence across the dairy products they buy.

The findings come at a time when dairy farming is facing multiple challenges with rising costs of labour and inputs including feed, fuel and machinery and the ever-present threat of lower cost imports produced to different standards.

The poll by Yonder (formerly Populus), commissioned by the Food Ethics Council, interviewed a representative sample of 2,079 people in the UK. Respondents were asked questions relating to dairy standards, support for farmers and whether food systems are a significant contributor to climate change.

More than three-quarters (77%) of those surveyed agreed that animal welfare and environmental standards relating to dairy products (e.g. a block of cheese or a yoghurt) should be at least as high as the animal welfare and environmental standards for milk. A similar proportion (76%) agreed that standards relating to dairy ingredients (e.g. cheese toppings for pizza) should be at least as high as for milk too.

Dan Crossley, Executive Director of the Food Ethics Council said:

“There is a misplaced assumption in the sector that animal welfare and environmental standards matter more on fresh milk than cheese or products containing dairy ingredients. This poll confirms people care about dairy standards, but there are so many elements of supply chains hidden from view that it’s hard for the public to demonstrate that.

We should be pushing for higher standards across the whole of the UK dairy sector so that animals, people and the planet benefit. The challenge for retailers and food manufacturing and foodservice companies is doing it in a way that doesn't result in price shocks and the offshoring of dairy production.”

The Food Ethics Council is currently running a [project](#) helping to accelerate the shift to fairer and more ethical dairy systems in the UK, working with producers and the wider supply chain. [The Dairy Project](#) will continue its work over the next two years.

**Key findings:**

- Over three-quarters (77%) of those surveyed agreed that animal welfare and environmental standards relating to dairy products (e.g. a block of cheese or a yoghurt) should be at least as high as the animal welfare and environmental standards for milk
- Similarly, over three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents agreed that animal welfare and environment standards relating to dairy ingredients (e.g. cheese toppings on pizza) should be at least as high as the animal welfare and environmental standards for milk
- Over three in four (76%) also said they would like to support UK dairy farmers that have high animal welfare and environmental standards

- Two-thirds (66%) of those surveyed agreed that what we eat and how our food is produced, transported, cooked and thrown away is a significant contributor to climate change, with only 12% disagreeing, and the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing or saying they don't know.

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#### Notes to editors

The results of the Yonder (formerly Populus) survey conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October 2021 are available [here](#).

**Yonder** conducted an online sample of 2,079 UK adults 18+ between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Data is weighted to be representative of the population of the UK. Targets for quotas and weights are taken from the National Readership Survey, a random probability F2F survey conducted annually with 34,000 adults. Yonder is a founder member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For further information see <http://www.britishpollingcouncil.org/>.

**The Food Ethics Council** (<http://www.foodethicscouncil.org>) is a UK-based charity whose mission is to accelerate the shift towards fair food systems that respect people, animals and the planet. It brings experts from across the food sector together and provides ethical tools & safe space for honest, meaningful dialogue. It challenges the status quo in food and farming and accepted ways of thinking. The Food Ethics Council also promotes 'in the round' ethical approaches and considered solutions that tackle root causes. Twitter [@FoodEthicsNews](#)

#### **Contacts**

Dan Crossley, Executive Director, Food Ethics Council  
0333 012 4147  
[dan@foodethicscouncil.org](mailto:dan@foodethicscouncil.org)

Helene Schulze, Communications Officer, Food Ethics Council  
0333 012 4147  
[helene@foodethicscouncil.org](mailto:helene@foodethicscouncil.org)