



Aquaculture and Aquatic Foods Public Opinion Survey - 2021

In March 2021, the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance commissioned GMA Research Corporation, a Bellevue, Washington-based market research and strategic insights firm, to gauge consumer attitudes toward aquatic foods (the product) and aquaculture in general (the process).

GMA conducted a statewide online survey among 900 randomly chosen adults. This survey carries a +/- 3% maximum error margin, with a 95% confidence level. Following are highlights from this survey.

- The top 3 factors which most influence adults making seafood purchases are affordability, locally produced/farmed, and certified sustainable. These are followed—in order—by such factors as nutritional information, cooking instructions, and the presence of a recognizable brand. While all factors play an important role in influencing purchasing decisions, the strongest influencer is *affordability*—how much does it cost compared to other protein choices or other seafood?
- A majority of those surveyed say that “Washington Grown” is important to them, noting that they would prefer to purchase “Washington Grown” seafood over fish harvested from foreign sources.
- A key finding of the survey is that shoppers say they would also *pay more for seafood locally produced/harvested in Washington State*.
- Most agree that the *farming of fish such as salmon and trout is an activity that can be done sustainably*. They also consider locally produced/farmed fish to be an important source of healthy seafood.
- The survey also found that, increasingly, people believe that that ocean harvesting of wild-caught species cannot continue to meet the future demand for seafood.
- Regarding aquaculture, most consumers surveyed agree that aquaculture and the production of aquatic foods provides consumers with a good source Omega-3 fatty acids, proven to improve human health.
- Aquaculture produces seafood that consumers can afford, and supplies the market with fresh, available protein year-round.
- Consumers ranked commercial fishing and aquaculture in the top 10 Washington industries, along with well-known and popular products such as apples, other tree fruit such as cherries, wine, wheat, potatoes, and beef.