



Introduction

Faunalytics (Formerly HRC) conducted a survey in June 2013 to explore a range of topics with females ages 13-21 in support of Mercy for Animals' youth outreach campaign. Faunalytics worked with a third party data collection company to gather responses from a representative sample of the target audience using an online survey. The survey yielded 1,053 responses indicating an overall margin of error of +/- 3.0% at a 95% confidence level (the error margin is higher for subgroups).

Demographics

A total of 1,053 females between the ages of 13 and 21 participated in the survey. A little less than a third (29%) were ages 13-15 at the time of the survey, while 33% were ages 16-18 and the remaining 38% were ages 19-21. Closely matching overall population statistics, 39% of respondents reside in the U.S. South, 21% reside in the Midwest, 20% reside in the West, and 19% reside in the Northeast. A plurality of respondents (33%) say they live in a suburb, while 28% live in a small city, 24% live in a large city, and the remaining 15% live in a rural area.

Regarding ethnicity, the vast majority of survey respondents selected only a single ethnic group. A majority (57%) said they are "European/Caucasian" (an additional 5% of respondents may fit this category based on recoded "other" responses) while 18% said "African American," 14% said "Latino," and 7% said "Asian." The final demographic question related to religion and spirituality. About a fifth of survey respondents (19%) consider themselves "very" religious/spiritual, while a third (34%) say "somewhat," 29% say "a little," and 18% say they are "not at all" religious or spiritual.

Influences and Activities

For most respondents, family has the most influence over their personal choices, with 55% of respondents ranking family as their primary influence. Overall, 91% of respondents ranked family among their top five influences. The next greatest influence is "friends or boyfriend/girlfriend," ranked number one by 24% of respondents and ranked as a top five influence by 88% of respondents. All other influences listed in the survey are much less important, with fewer than 5% ranking any other item as number one. The least influential source is celebrities; less than a third of respondents (31%) ranked celebrities among their top five influences.

The most popular activities for survey respondents include sports (35% are involved), music/choir/band/orchestra (34%), and art (30%). Nearly a fourth of respondents (23%) are involved



in theater/drama and a fifth (21%) are involved with a religious group. All other activities listed in the survey had lower involvement rates between 9% and 16%. With respect to potential social causes, 16% of respondents are involved with community service or social justice clubs and only 9% are involved with an environmental club (the activity with the lowest participation).

Regarding other activities relating to social issues, the vast majority of respondents (79%) live in households that recycle. A very strong majority (71%) says it knows at least one vegetarian or vegan, while nearly the same proportion (69%) says it knows someone who is trying to reduce how much meat they eat. Majorities of respondents have friends or family members who are gay (61%) and try to use environmentally friendly products even if they cost more (59%). Nearly half of respondents (45%) try to eat organic even if it costs more and 44% have posted a video of themselves online.

When asked about specific actions taken in the past 12 months, more than a third of respondents (37%) decided not to buy a product or service because they disagree with the company's social or political values. About three in ten respondents (29%) shared a social justice message through Facebook or other social media, while 27% signed a petition online and 23% bought a product or service because they agree with the company's values. Nearly a fifth of respondents (18%) signed a paper petition, but only 8% contacted a government official online, only 6% contacted a government official offline, and only 6% attended a protest.

The final activity-related question was specifically about factory farming and "how meat is produced," asking respondents to list which sources of information they have ever accessed on these topics. Majorities of respondents have talked to a friend (56%), watched a film (56%), or watched an online video (55%) about factory farming. Smaller but still substantial proportions of respondents have visited a website (42%), read a book (31%), attended a talk/lecture (26%), and/or read a leaflet (24%).

Beliefs, Causes, and Species Attitudes

Nearly all respondents (95%) are at least "somewhat" concerned about the state of the world. Specifically, about six in ten respondents (59%) say they are concerned, but do not know what they can do about it. A fifth of respondents (20%) are concerned and are doing something about it, while 17% are "somewhat" concerned and 5% of respondents are not concerned.



When asked about their concern for different social causes, the two causes that ranked highest (i.e., are most important to respondents) were bullying and human rights, each ranked in the top five by about six in ten respondents. Other important causes that were ranked in the top five by a majority of respondents included poverty, violence prevention, animal protection (ranked among the top five by 51% of respondents), and the environment. There was relatively less concern about other issues, particularly “democracy/corporate power.”

Most respondents make the connection between food choices and farmed animal suffering. Specifically, a slight majority of respondents (51%) agrees, “eating animal products (like meat, eggs, and dairy) directly contributes to the suffering of animals.” Just under one in five respondents (18%) “strongly” agrees with the statement, while a third (33%) “somewhat” agrees with it. One in five respondents (20%) disagrees with the statement, including 9% who say they “strongly” disagree with it. Respondents are more likely to say they “neither agree nor disagree” than to disavow the connection between food choices and farmed animal suffering.

When asked how much they “like” different species of animals, there was a clear distinction between traditional companion animals and farmed animals. While 90% of respondents “really like” or “like” dogs and 74% say the same for cats, there is much less concern for all other animals. Fish rank third with 58% of respondents liking them, followed by cows (52%), chickens (48%), pigs (48%), and then turkeys (36%). Lastly, only about one in five respondents (19%) say they like or really like snakes. Interestingly, for all farmed animal species (except fish), a plurality of respondents says they are “neutral” toward the given species.

Veg Terminology

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to click on a phrase (online) that offers a free starter guide for vegetarianism. The survey examined responses to different terms including vegan, vegetarian, meat-less, and meat-free. Overall there were minor differences (generally within the margin of error) between terms and about two-thirds of respondents (63-69%) said they are “not at all” or “not very” likely to click the link. There is slightly more interest in the term “vegetarian,” with 18% of respondents saying they are “very” or “extremely” likely to click on that term. This was followed closely by “meat-less” (16% very/extremely likely to click), “meat-free” (14%), and then “vegan” (13%).



Dietary Status and Motivations

Nearly a third of respondents (29%) say they eat meat (“including chicken, turkey, beef, pork, fish, and seafood”) every day, while another 46% say “most days.” About one in five respondents (19%) say they “sometimes” eat meat, while 3% say “rarely” and 3% say “never.” Among those who “never” consume meat (30 individuals), all but one respondent (97%) says they consider themselves vegetarian or vegan.

For current vegetarians (note small sample size), the primary motivation is clearly to “prevent animals from suffering and being killed,” ranked number one by 70% of vegetarians. “It’s better for my health” came in a distant second with just 13% of respondents ranking it number one. Interestingly, however, the health motivation was slightly more likely to appear among the top five rankings, meaning that it is a common secondary or tertiary reason for being vegetarian. Other important motivations include the good taste of vegetarian food and the reduced harm to the environment, while the *least important* motivations are that one’s boyfriend/girlfriend is vegetarian or that it’s “cool and trendy.”

For current meat consumers, the best reasons to be vegetarian are somewhat different. Again, health and concern for animal suffering rank highest, but health is on par with animal suffering as a motivation. Specifically, 28% of meat eaters ranked animal suffering as the best reason to be vegetarian, while 27% said the same for health. Health ranked among the top five motivations for 90% of meat eaters and animal suffering ranked among the top five for 83%. Other important motivations include losing weight and reducing impact on the environment, while the *least important* motivations were again one’s boyfriend/girlfriend and vegetarianism being “cool and trendy.”

When meat consumers were asked why they are not vegetarian, the clear primary reason was because they “would miss certain foods.” Nearly all respondents (99%) ranked this among their top five reasons and 38% ranked it number one. Other commonly selected reasons included, “I wouldn’t know what to eat” (among top five for 75%), “I think it would be inconvenient” (among top five for 65%), and “I never really thought about it” (also among top five for 65%). Again, the *least important* reasons relate to disapproval from one’s boyfriend/girlfriend (and, to a lesser extent, one’s family) or vegetarianism not being “cool or trendy.”



Importantly, nearly one in five respondents who currently consume meat (18%) say they have been vegetarian in the past. This represents a significant amount of backsliding, especially for a relatively young audience. It may be advisable to focus less on the “why” of veganism and vegetarianism and more on “how” to sustain the choice for audiences like these that already have an interest in vegetarianism, but show a high likelihood of recidivism.

Potential Dietary Changes

When meat eaters were asked if they would consider becoming vegetarian in the future, nearly half of respondents (46%) said yes. When asked if they would consider *eating less meat* in the future, a strong majority (76%) said yes. Regarding specific commitments, respondents are most likely to commit to eating vegetarian meals one day per week. A plurality of just over a third (36%) chose this option, while 28% said they would prefer to eat one vegetarian meal per day. Eating vegetarian meals for one week per month or daily before 6pm were much less popular and a fifth of respondents selected “none of the above.”

Among current meat eaters, being vegetarian is perceived as a difficult choice. More than three-fourths of respondents said they think being vegetarian would be either “very” difficult (35%) or “somewhat” difficult (42%). This is especially interesting given that many of these respondents expressed a willingness to consider becoming vegetarian in the future (see above). By contrast, fewer than one in five respondents said they thought being vegetarian would be either “very” (3%) or “somewhat” easy (14%).

Finally, meat consumers were asked what they would need to be able to become vegetarian in the future, with the most popular selection being, “a strong reason to motivate me.” Nearly half of respondents (47%) chose this option, followed by lower-cost food options (41%), better tasting food options (40%), and specific meal ideas or recipes (40%). The least commonly selected item answer was “support from my boyfriend/girlfriend,” selected by only 15% of respondents. Nearly a fourth (23%) chose the option, “N/A (not interested in going vegetarian).”