NSF Research Reveals 72% of Brits Demand Animal Wellness Compliance from Food Companies

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NSF research shows that a significant shift towards ethical consumerism is underway, with a majority of Brits calling for clear animal wellness transparency and compliance from food companies.

Oxford, UK (February 06, 2024) – NSF, the leading global public health organisation, announced today its compelling research findings on UK consumers' attitudes towards animal wellness and its impact on their purchasing decisions.

The recent study conducted by NSF confirms that British consumers are highly conscious of animal wellness in food production, with a significant majority placing importance on companies demonstrating transparency and compliance in animal wellness throughout their global supply chains. While data from the UK government shows the demand for meat is at an all-time low, British consumer's demand for ethical consumerism is growing.

"Animal wellness should not be a marginal concern for brands anymore; it's a defining feature of ethical consumerism that is increasingly impacting purchasing decisions," said Dr. Elaine Vanier, a veterinarian and the animal wellness program lead for NSF. "Animal wellness is about doing the right thing for the animal and refers to the quality of life experienced by animals in the food supply chain. Including physical and psychological health, living conditions, and how animals are handled and treated. It substantially impacts sustainability, product food safety, and the responsible use of antibiotics and medication. Our research reiterates the weight consumers place on this matter. We are increasingly called upon to support brands committed to putting these values into practice across their entire protein supply chain."

Key findings from the study include:

- 68% of UK consumers say animal wellness is either very or extremely important to purchasing decisions.
- 72% of UK consumer said it was very important or extremely important that companies demonstrate consistency and compliance with animal wellness throughout their supply chain.
- 73% declared they are more likely to purchase a product that has been certified for animal wellness by a third party, especially those between the 30-44 age group, who were 87% more likely.
- Only 13% said they would be unwilling to pay a higher price for products certified for animal wellness.
- 84% expect animal products sold by international brands to comply with animal wellness standards, which rises to over 90% for Brits aged 30-44.
- Only 3 in 10 said they were very or extremely informed of UK animal wellness standards.

The revelation that animal welfare labels are often misinterpreted underscores a critical need for consumer education. "Our findings highlight a disconnect between consumer perceptions and the real standards behind labels," Dr. Vanier comments. "Clear, certified labelling is vital to bridge this gap, granting consumers the assurance they seek when making ethical food choices."

For food manufacturing and agricultural companies, NSF's research indicates that investing in animal wellness is not merely a moral obligation or marketing trend. It is a strategic imperative that resonates with countless consumers, signalling the arrival of a critical juncture for the industry to align with progressive ethical practices.

"It's clear that a significant majority of British consumers understand that animal wellness comes at a price, with only 13% reluctant to pay more for animal wellness-certified products. This speaks volumes about the UK's consumer conscience and their readiness to invest in ethical and sustainable choices," said Dale Newitt, Director of Supply Chain Food Safety, NSF. "British consumers are sending a powerful message across borders: 84% expect international brands to not just meet but uphold animal wellness standards. This is a clarion call for global players to align with UK standards of animal care or risk losing relevance in this key market."

NSF encourages retailers, producers, and food brands to embrace independent animal wellness certifications such as NSF GAWS as a robust framework for delivering on the promise of animal

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wellness. This commitment benefits all parties involved, offering long-term advantages such as reduced antibiotic use, improved feed efficiency, higher yields, and better product grading.

With the growing consumer demand for ethical food production, NSF stands prepared to guide and support the industry with expertise and solutions to advance global animal wellness.

For more information on animal wellness and NSF, visit www.nsf.org.

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