



NATCOL

US Consumer F&B Colors Attitudes
2024



About NATCOL

Established in 1979, the Natural Food Colours Association (NATCOL) is the go-to organization for the use of natural coloring solutions worldwide.

It represents companies and associations which provide Natural Food Colors and Coloring Foods for the food and beverages, feed and related industries.

NATCOL Consumer Attitudes Study – Study Overview

How much does the choice of food colors influence US consumers' purchasing decisions? Do consumers care about whether a product uses natural versus artificial colors? When should food manufacturers be particularly concerned about their choice of food colors, whether natural or artificial?

These are just a few of the questions that the Natural Colours Association (@NATCOL) explored in the *NATCOL US Consumer Food and Beverage Colors Attitudes Study, 2024*. This landmark study examined the topic of natural food colors and the extent to which consumers are aware of them, accept their use in various food categories and consider them when making purchasing decisions. It also examined how to best communicate their use and presence in food and beverage products. The study, consisting of qualitative, on-line chats involving 34 consumers, followed by an on-line survey of 1,001 US consumers, was completed in early 2024. Respondents were screened to be responsible for household purchases, and the sample was qualified to represent the general US population, with consideration for gender, ethnicity, geography and income levels.

Step 01

Qualitative Live Chats

Gathering qualitative insights and opinions from the general population in the US in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions, preferences and attitudes towards natural colors.



Step 02

Quantitative Online Study

Collect quantitative data and insights from a larger sample size of the general population, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions, behaviors, etc. So that the data can be used in an efficient and scalable way to analyze the understanding of natural color.



“At NATCOL, we strive to raise awareness about natural colors and advocate for their use,” says Luc Ganivet, President of NATCOL. “This study represents a critical investment by NATCOL, giving us deep insights into consumers’ attitudes, perceptions and understanding of food colors in general, and natural food colors, in particular. More importantly, it provides our membership – natural color suppliers – as well as their customers – food and beverage manufacturers – with insights on how food colors influence consumer purchasing decisions and contribute to the market success of their products.”



Low awareness of the topic of coloring for foods & beverages

- Ingredient list is important in consumer purchase decisions
- Other additives such as flavors or preservatives are more important to consumers than colors
- In the current purchase decision, the absence of artificial color is more important to consumers than the presence of natural colors



In direct comparison clear preference of consumers for natural colors over artificial color

- Clear preference for natural over artificial additives in food and beverages
- Natural colors are significantly preferred by consumers over artificial colors



Positive connotation of natural colors versus artificial colors

- Positive associations with natural colors such as naturalness, healthiness, safety and happiness
- Rather negative associations with artificial colors such as being processed and harmful as well as causing allergies



Open to more information and education about natural colors

- Consumers feel particularly informed about the use of natural additives
- Consumers would like more information and education about the use of natural flavors and colors
- Consumers see food manufacturers, consumer protection agencies and government as having the primary responsibility for providing this information



Explanation significantly increases acceptance of natural colors

- After explaining to consumers what natural colors are, acceptance of natural colors increases significantly, by 13%
- After explaining to consumers what artificial colors are, acceptance of artificial colors does not change much, but decreases slightly by 3%



Natural color claims encourage consumers

- Consumers are encouraged by claims that promise the presence of a natural color (with natural colors | with colors from a natural source | with colors derived from nature | colored with fruit and vegetable juices)
- Consumers are encouraged by claims that promise the absence of artificial colors (no artificial colors | no artificial dyes)



Difficult for consumers to define what natural colors are

- The majority of consumers currently consider natural color to be the product-inherent color of the product that comes from the main ingredients
- A large proportion of consumers also believe that a natural color is an added color from a natural source



Willingness to pay a higher price for natural colors

- Significant majority expect products with natural colors to be more expensive
- Half of consumers are also willing to pay a higher price
- In particular, higher income households would be willing to pay up to 10% more or even more

Over the course of the next 16 weeks, @NATCOL will be releasing their top 8 insights from the *NATCOL US Consumer Food and Beverage Color Attitudes Study, 2024*. To receive updates on the study findings, follow @NATCOL on LinkedIn. To learn more about natural colors, visit <https://natcol.org/>. #naturalcolors



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