

SURVEY

# Epoch Readers' Poll: Strong Backing for Ban on Food Dyes, Push for Tougher Food Safety Rules

The poll reveals overwhelming support for the Trump administration's 'Make America Healthy Again' food safety push.

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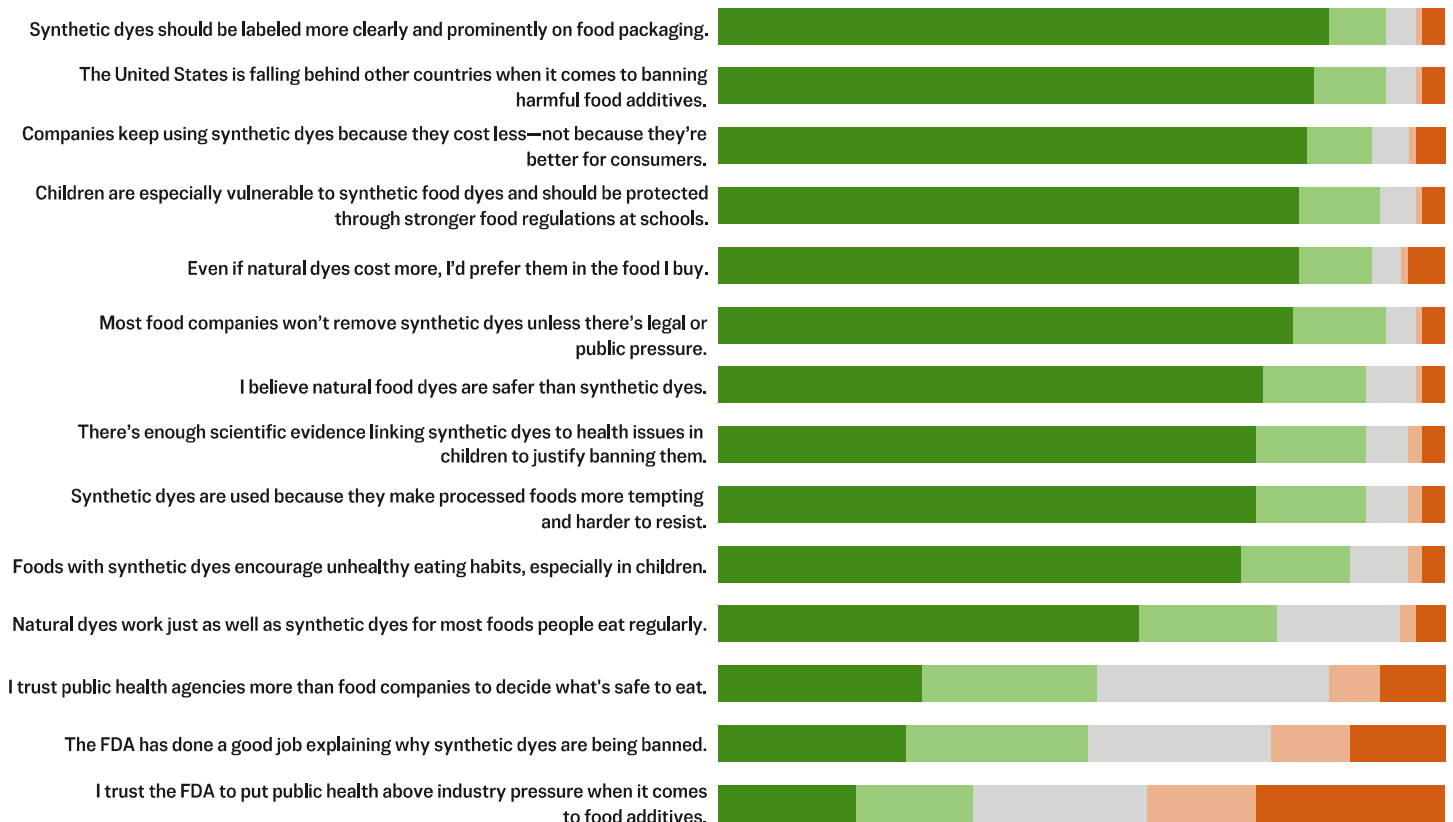
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By Tom Ozimek | May 17, 2025 Updated: May 17, 2025

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neutral    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree



THE EPOCH TIMES

A new poll shows that Epoch Times readers overwhelmingly support eliminating synthetic food dyes, tightening labeling rules, and holding food companies accountable for what goes into their products, reflecting broader backing for the Trump administration’s “Make America Healthy Again” (MAHA) agenda.

From dye bans to distrust in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), readers weighed in on the future of food safety—and made clear they want a cleaner, more transparent, and health-focused food supply.

The poll drew 15,402 responses, including thousands of detailed write-in comments that reveal deep concern about the chemicalization of the American food system. Readers expressed concern about everything from artificial additives and seed oils to regulatory loopholes and industry influence. Many linked food dyes and other preservatives to conditions such as cancer, ADHD, and obesity, calling for stronger U.S. standards to better protect public health.

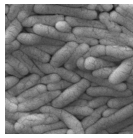
The results come amid sweeping regulatory changes led by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has made food safety a cornerstone of the MAHA agenda. Since his taking office in February, the FDA has banned Red No. 3, [announced](#) plans to eventually phase out all remaining synthetic dyes, and begun a review of the “Generally Recognized As Safe” (GRAS) loophole, which allows food additives to bypass formal safety review.

## Labels, Laws, and Corporate Profit

At the heart of the food dye debate are concerns about transparency, accountability, and child safety. The first four questions of The Epoch Times poll reflect strong reader unity in demanding a food system that puts health above profit, with near-unanimous support for clearer labeling and stronger oversight.

A commanding 92 percent of respondents said synthetic dyes should be labeled more clearly and prominently on food packaging, with 84 percent expressing strong agreement. Just 4 percent were neutral, and 4 percent disagreed at any level. The consensus seems clear—readers want to know exactly what they’re eating, especially when it comes to artificial additives.

This demand for transparency extends to why dyes are used in the first place. Ninety percent of readers said cost, not consumer benefit, drives the continued use of synthetic dyes, a belief echoed in write-in comments accusing food companies of choosing profits over safety. Only 5 percent of respondents were neutral, and another 5 percent disagreed.



Federal Food Safety Oversight System  
Needs Overhaul: Watchdog



US Health Secretary Delays Rule Updating  
Definition of Healthy on Food Labels

Concerns about weak U.S. regulations were also prominent. Ninety-two percent believe the United States is lagging behind other countries in banning harmful additives, with 82 percent strongly agreeing. Several readers cited Europe, Canada, and Japan as examples of jurisdictions that have already removed artificial dyes or replaced them with natural alternatives.



Bottles containing a variety of colored liquids sit on a shelf in a lab at Sensient Technologies Corp., a color additive manufacturing company, in St. Louis., on April 2, 2025. AP Photo/Jeff Roberson

This view mirrors [recent criticism](#) from Kennedy, who has ordered the FDA to reevaluate and potentially revoke the GRAS pathway, a longstanding rule that allows companies to introduce food additives without prior FDA review or public disclosure of safety data.

The responses were also emphatic when it comes to children's health. Ninety-one percent of readers said synthetic dyes pose particular risks to children and should be limited in school settings, with 5 percent neutral and 4 percent opposed. That sentiment aligns with [new laws](#) in states like California, which banned certain dyes from school meals in 2023, and West Virginia, which passed one of the strictest food additive bans in the country this year, eliminating seven dyes and two

preservatives from all school lunches starting in August and from all food sold in the state by 2028.

Taken together, these responses show that readers don't just want surface changes—they're demanding deep reform. And as the next section reveals, they're also willing to put their money where their mouths are.

## Cost, Choice, and Clean Ingredients

Support for reform and greater food safety doesn't stop at regulation—it runs through the grocery aisle and the personal choices of Americans.

When asked whether they would choose natural dyes even if it meant paying more, 90 percent of readers said yes, while 6 percent said no, and 4 percent were undecided. The numbers suggest that health-conscious values are increasingly shaping purchasing behavior.

Still, readers don't believe that consumer demand alone will bring about necessary reform. Ninety-two percent said companies won't remove synthetic dyes unless forced, either by legislation or public pressure. Just 4 percent disagreed, and 4 percent were neutral. That skepticism echoes Kennedy's [recent meeting](#) with food giants like PepsiCo and Kraft Heinz, during which he gave them a two-year deadline to eliminate dyes such as Red 40.

When it comes to safety, readers drew a sharp line between natural and synthetic additives. Eighty-nine percent said natural dyes are safer, compared to just 4 percent who disagreed and 7 percent who were unsure. The same percentage said the scientific case for banning synthetic dyes is already strong, with many write-in responses citing risks such as ADHD, cancer, and neurological harm. Six percent were unsure whether there's enough scientific evidence that synthetic dyes cause health issues in children, while another 5 percent disagreed. These findings track with the FDA's recent decision to ban Red No. 3 and its [warning](#) that all petroleum-based synthetic dyes are on the chopping block.





Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Marty Makary speaks during a news conference on the FDA's intent to phase out the use of petroleum-based synthetic dyes in the nation's food supply at the Hubert Humphrey Building Auditorium in Washington, on April 22, 2025. Jose Luis Magana/AP Photo

The poll also reveals skepticism about the intent behind using synthetic dyes in the first place. Eighty-nine percent said artificial dyes are used to make processed foods more tempting and harder to resist. Only 5 percent disagreed, and 6 percent were neutral. Some readers described dyes as marketing tools designed to increase the consumption of otherwise unhealthy foods, making them more appealing and addictive.

These responses suggest that synthetic dyes aren't just seen as unnecessary—they're viewed as harmful, manipulative, and emblematic of a food system that's in need of an overhaul.

## Risk, Regulation, and Public Distrust

The debate over food dyes, as reflected in the poll, reveals a deeper concern about the intersection of personal health, regulatory shortcomings, and corporate power.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed that synthetic dyes encourage unhealthy eating habits, particularly in children. Only 5 percent disagreed, and 8 percent remained neutral. Many who

provided write-in responses pointed to dyes as a factor in the rise of childhood obesity, diabetes, and behavioral disorders.

Still, readers were slightly more divided on whether natural dyes are just as effective as synthetic ones. While 77 percent said yes, a larger-than-usual share—17 percent—were neutral, and 6 percent disagreed. The response suggests that while natural alternatives are preferred for health reasons, some uncertainty remains about their practical performance.

When it comes to food safety, trust in institutions appears to be fraying. About 52 percent of respondents said they trust public health agencies more than food companies to determine what's safe to eat. Thirty-two percent were neutral, and 16 percent disagreed, which hints at substantial public uncertainty and a yawning institutional trust gap.

This skepticism carried over to how the FDA has handled its messaging around safety and the recent bans. Just 51 percent felt the agency had done a good job explaining why certain dyes are being phased out, while 24 percent disagreed and 25 percent were neutral. This suggests federal agencies have room to improve how they communicate with the public.

The most polarized response in the entire poll came on the question of FDA independence. Only 35 percent of readers said they believe the FDA puts public health above industry pressure. A larger share—41 percent—disagreed, and 24 percent were undecided. That distrust is echoed in Kennedy's own criticisms of the agency, where he has accused the FDA of regulatory capture and [allowing](#) industry to shape food policy through influence and loopholes like GRAS.

Taken together, these responses suggest that while support for reform is high, faith in the existing regulatory apparatus is not.



Jobe Washington and Dwight Brown use a large sifter to mix a shade of yellow coloring at Sensient Technologies Corp., a color additive manufacturing company, in St. Louis, on April 2, 2025. Jeff Roberson/AP Photo

## Food, Fear, and the Fight for Reform

Open-ended responses revealed deep concern about the chemicalization of America's food supply, with particular focus on preservatives, artificial additives, and overprocessing.

The top concern was too much processing, with thousands describing today's foods as overengineered and undernourishing, filled with lab-derived substances that many readers linked to cancer, obesity, ADHD, and other chronic conditions.

Additives were the next most pressing issue, with many readers sharply criticizing regulatory loopholes that allow ingredients banned in other places like Canada and Europe, with specific substances mentioned including carrageenan, BHA, BHT, sodium nitrite, and MSG, among others. Respondents called for clearer labels, natural alternatives, and fewer corporate-driven compromises to public health.

Another major focus was on artificial food dyes. Many respondents viewed them as harmful—especially to children—while often citing personal experiences with behavioral problems, allergies, or other



negative health outcomes. While many said they support a full ban on dyes, others see them as part of a broader problem, grouping them with seed oils, genetic modification of foods, preservatives, pesticides, and other additives they believe are making Americans sick.

Also frequently cited was the saturation of foods with added sugars, especially high fructose corn syrup. Many said corn syrup is ubiquitous, unnecessary, and tied directly to obesity, diabetes, and food addiction. Artificial sweeteners like aspartame also drew concern for their neurological and metabolic effects.

Strong opposition to genetically modified foods and glyphosate was voiced, with respondents warning of their effects on the gut, endocrine system, and long-term health. Pesticide residues and chemical herbicides were described as hidden toxins in the food chain, contributing to rising illness.



Candy using food coloring are displayed in a lab at Sensient Technologies Corp., a color additive manufacturing company, in St. Louis., on April 2, 2025. Jeff Roberson/AP Photo

Respondents also criticized seed oils, describing them as inflammatory and harmful to cellular and cardiovascular health. Many urged their replacement with traditional fats like coconut, olive oil, or tallow. Additional concerns included contaminated water, particularly fluoride, microplastics, and pharmaceutical runoff, which were viewed as threats to the broader food system.

Overall, the responses reflect a strong desire for natural, nutrient-rich food and transparency, along with a regulatory overhaul that puts health before profit.



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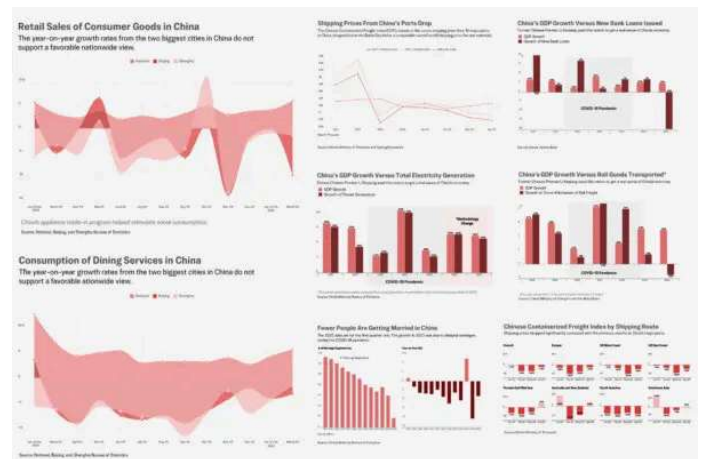
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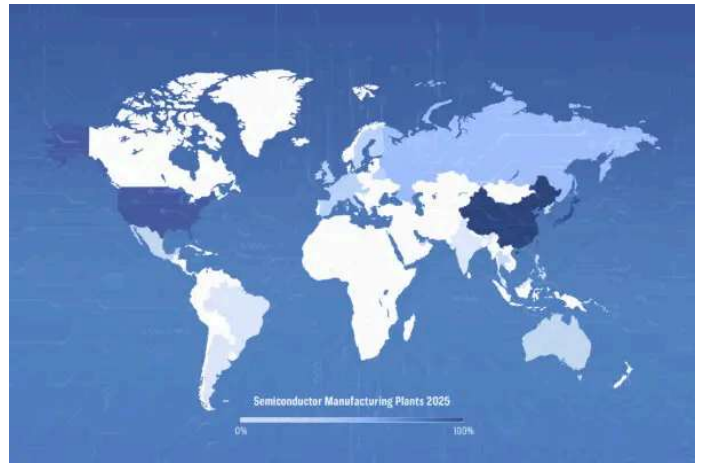
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