



UNISON – MEAT INSPECTION SURVEY

DECEMBER 2016



METHODOLOGY

ComRes interviewed 1847 adults from England and Wales online between 14th and 15th December 2016. Data were weighted to be representative by gender, age, socio-economic grade and region.

ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules (www.britishpollingcouncil.org). This commits us to the highest standards of transparency.

The BPC's rules state that all data and research findings made on the basis of surveys conducted by member organisations that enter the public domain must include reference to the following:

- The company conducting the research (ComRes)
- The client commissioning the survey
- Dates of interviewing
- Method of obtaining the interviews (e.g. in-person, post, telephone, internet)
- The universe effectively represented (all adults, voters etc.)
- The percentages upon which conclusions are based
- Size of the sample and geographic coverage.

Published references (such as a press release) should also show a web address where full data tables may be viewed, and they should also show the complete wording of questions upon which any data that has entered the public domain are based.

All press releases or other publications must be checked with ComRes before use. ComRes requires 48 hours to check a press release unless otherwise agreed.

Findings marked with a * indicate a low base size and should be treated as indicative only.

FINDINGS

Eight in ten (79%) adults in England and Wales say that meat inspection should remain the Government’s responsibility, with only 6% saying it should be privatised.

Q2. The Food Standards Agency is currently responsible for ensuring every animal slaughtered for human consumption is independently inspected to prevent diseased or contaminated meat from entering the food chain. The Government is currently considering making greater use of private contractors and scaling down the number of inspections carried out by independent inspectors. Do you think that meat inspection in slaughterhouses should be privatised, or should it remain the responsibility of Government meat inspectors?

				Don't know
Meat inspection should be privatised	6%	79%	Meat inspection should remain the Government’s responsibility	15%

Base: All English and Welsh adults (n=1847)

- Though a majority of adults in England and Wales say that meat inspection should remain the Government’s responsibility, there are some demographic differences within this:
 - Older respondents (85% 45–54, 83% 55–64, 87% 65+) are more likely than their younger counterparts (69% 18–24, 72% 25–34, 73% 35–44) to say that meat inspection should remain the Government’s responsibility.
 - Men are more likely than women to say that meat inspection should remain the Government’s responsibility (83% vs. 75%). This is not because women think that meat inspection should be privatised, instead they are twice as likely to say they don’t know (20% vs. 10% of men).
 - Respondents living in Wales are more likely than those living in England to say it should remain the Government’s responsibility (87%* vs. 78%).

A majority (62%) of adults in England and Wales say they would feel less confident that meat would be safe to eat if meat inspection were privatised.

Q3. If meat inspection were privatised, would you feel more or less confident that meat would be safe to eat, or would it make no difference?

	%
More confident	4%
It would make no difference	23%
Less confident	62%
Don't know	11%

Base: All English and Welsh adults (n=1847)

- Older adults in England and Wales (73% 45–54, 73% 55–64, 72% 65+) are more likely than younger adults (43% 18–24, 49% 25–34, 58% 35–44) to say that they would be less confident that it would be safe to eat meat if meat inspection was privatised.
- There are also significant differences between English and Welsh adults according to their political affiliations:
 - Adults who think of themselves as Conservative or UKIP (26% for both) are more likely than those who think of themselves as Labour or Liberal Democrat (19% and 16%) to say that it would make no difference to their level of confidence, if the meat inspection were privatised.
 - Three quarters of Liberal Democrats (73%) say they would feel less confident in eating meat if meat inspection were privatised, compared to around half of adults (54%) who think of themselves as UKIP.

The vast majority (87%) of adults in England and Wales say that slaughterhouses should be required to have their food safety and quality standards independently assessed by external, government inspectors.

Q4. Which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion?

				Don't know
Slaughterhouses should be required to have their food safety and quality standards independently assessed by external, Government inspectors	87%	3%	Slaughterhouses should not be required to have their food safety and quality standards independently assessed by external, Government inspectors if they are employing a member of their own staff to do so	9%

Base: All English and Welsh adults (n=1847)

- Men are more likely than women to say that slaughterhouses should be required to have their food safety and quality standards independently assessed (90% vs. 85%). Correspondingly, women are more likely to say they don't know (11% vs. 7% of men).
- Older English and Welsh adults are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that slaughterhouses should be required to be assessed, with 80% of 18–24 year olds saying this compared to 95% of 65+ year olds.

Three quarters (74%) of adults in England and Wales say they would be concerned about changes that would see fewer independent inspections by FSA vets and inspectors and more inspections by private contractors and slaughterhouses themselves.

Q5. To what extent, if at all, would you be concerned or unconcerned about changes that would see fewer independent inspections by FSA vets and inspectors, and more inspections by private contractors and slaughterhouses themselves?

	%
NET: Concerned	74%
Very concerned	37%
Fairly concerned	38%
Not very concerned	7%
Not at all concerned	1%
NET: Not concerned	8%
It would not make a difference to me whether meat inspections are carried out by independent contractors or private contractors	7%
Don't know	11%

Base: All English and Welsh adults (n=1847)

- Older adults in England and Wales are more likely to be concerned about changes which would see fewer independent inspections than their younger counterparts (81% of 65+ year olds vs. 58% of 18–24 year olds). Correspondingly, younger respondents are more likely to say they would not be concerned (15% of 18–24 year olds vs. 7% of 65+ year olds).
- Similar proportions of respondents who associate themselves with the major political parties say they would be concerned about fewer independent inspections by FSA vets and inspectors. However, Labour, Liberal Democrats and UKIP are more likely than Conservatives to say they are very concerned (43% Labour, 47% Liberal Democrat, 43% UKIP vs. 30% Conservative) whilst Conservatives are more likely to say they are fairly concerned (44% Conservatives vs. 35% Labour, 35% Liberal Democrat, 32% UKIP).

Adults from England and Wales are divided regarding whether the UK should keep the existing laws that govern how meat is inspected, with half (51%) saying that the UK should and a third (33%) say the UK should create new laws that govern how meat is inspected.

Q6. A large proportion of the laws that govern how meat is inspected in the UK are based upon European regulations, which could change when the UK leaves the EU. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view on what should happen to these laws when the UK leaves the EU?

	%	%		Don't know
The UK should keep the existing laws that govern how meat is inspected	51%	33%	The UK should create new laws that govern how meat is inspected	16%

Base: All English and Welsh adults (n=1847)

- Though still a minority, older English and Welsh adults are around twice as likely as younger adults to say that the UK should create new laws that govern how meat is inspected (42% of 65+ year olds vs. 22% of 18–24 year olds).
- Around half of respondents (52%) who associate themselves with UKIP say that the UK should create new laws that govern how meat is inspected, a significantly higher proportion than those who associate with other political parties (40% Conservatives, 26% Labour, 17% Liberal Democrat).

THANK YOU

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