

# Bird Flu (H5N1): Concern and Confidence in Canada

June 2024

**pollara**  
strategic insights

# Methodology

- **Sampling:** Online survey of N=1,750 adult (18+) Canadians
- **Field Window:** June 6 to 17, 2024
- **Reliability:** As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of  $\pm 2.3\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments. Although demographic and regional quotas were employed to ensure reliable and comparable sub-segment analysis, the data was weighted by the most current gender, age, & regional Census data, to ensure the sample reflects the actual population of adult Canadians. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

REGION	Unweighted Base Size
Atlantic	319
Quebec	366
Ontario	442
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	177
Alberta	124
British Columbia (+ Territories)	322
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>1,750</b>

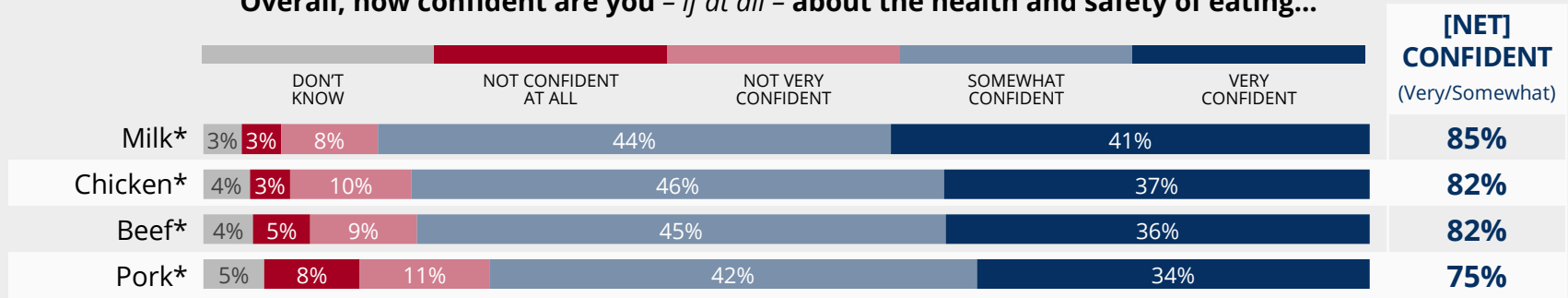
## Key findings

- As the bird flu (H5N1) spreads in the U.S., half of Canadians are concerned about the virus spreading to humans, with four-in-ten worried it will result in a global pandemic or national epidemic. Personal concern is lower, as more than a third are concerned that they or a family member will catch it.
  - Only about one-in-ten Canadians are unfamiliar with this issue.
  - For context, concern about catching COVID-19 is only marginally higher.
- The public is divided in their perceptions of the federal government's ability to prevent bird flu from becoming an epidemic amongst Canadians. Equal proportions are confident (42%) and not confident (42%).
  - Nevertheless, only four-in-ten (44%) Canadians believe that preventing the Bird Flu from becoming a national epidemic should be a top (14%) or major (30%) priority for the federal government. Another 29% feel it should be a moderate priority.
- Prior to mentioning bird flu, we asked Canadians how confident they were in the health and safety of eating a range of related foods. Most Canadians are currently confident consuming milk (85%), chicken (82%), beef (82%), and pork (75%) – with between 34% to 41% feeling intensely so.

Most (75% - 85%) Canadians are confident in the health and safety of eating all milk and meat products tested. Pork receives the lowest confidence score, lagging 7 points behind other meats.

- Younger Canadians (18-34) appear to be less confident in the health and safety of any milk/meat than older Canadians. Confidence is higher in Quebec and Alberta.

### Overall, how confident are you – if at all – about the health and safety of eating...



[NET] CONFIDENT (Very/Somewhat)	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE				REGION					
		M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
Milk*	85%	85%	85%	78%	83%	89%	92%	85%	88%	83%	86%	86%	84%
Chicken*	82%	83%	81%	73%	80%	86%	92%	81%	85%	82%	79%	83%	79%
Beef*	82%	83%	81%	70%	81%	87%	90%	82%	85%	80%	79%	87%	77%
Pork*	75%	76%	75%	65%	73%	80%	86%	76%	85%	71%	69%	78%	72%



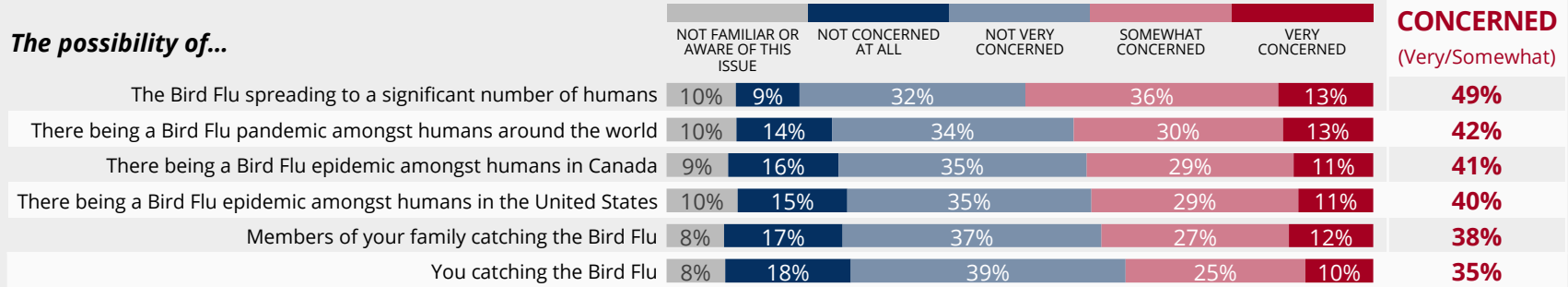
BF1. Overall, how confident are you – if at all – about the health and safety of eating...  
Base: Split Sample. Total (N=1,750). \*and food/food products containing such

Just under half of Canadians are concerned about the spread of the Bird Flu to humans. Four-in-ten are concerned about possibility of a H5N1 global pandemic or national epidemic in the U.S. or Canada. More than a third are concerned that they (35%) or a family member (38%) will catch it.

- Atlantic and Ontario residents are more concerned than other regions, while Quebec and Alberta are less concerned.

### CONCERN about Avian Influenza (H5N1)

#### The possibility of...



#### [NET] CONCERNED

(Very/Somewhat)

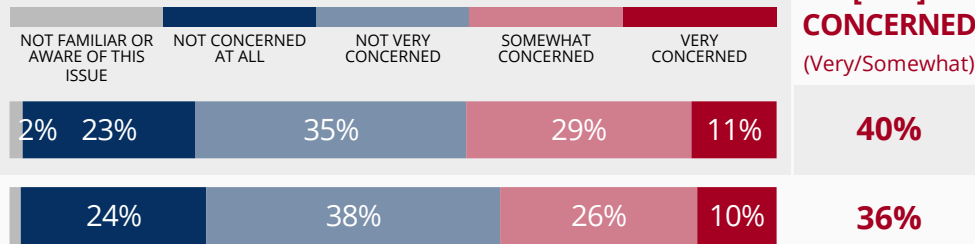
	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE				REGION					
		M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
The BF* spreading to a significant number of humans	49%	48%	50%	47%	45%	47%	58%	57%	41%	53%	55%	42%	52%
There being a BF pandemic amongst humans around the world	42%	42%	43%	44%	39%	43%	43%	49%	35%	47%	45%	36%	44%
There being a BF epidemic amongst humans in Canada	41%	41%	39%	41%	42%	41%	38%	48%	33%	46%	44%	34%	41%
There being a BF epidemic amongst humans in the United States	40%	39%	41%	40%	38%	41%	41%	44%	33%	45%	44%	32%	41%
Members of your family catching the BF	38%	38%	39%	40%	39%	38%	36%	47%	31%	44%	39%	30%	38%
You catching the BF	35%	34%	36%	35%	38%	35%	33%	40%	27%	41%	36%	28%	36%



BF2. Now, some questions about the Avian Influenza (H5N1), also known as the Bird Flu. Thinking about this, how concerned are you – if at all – about the following...? Base: Split Sample. Total (N=1,750). \*BF = Bird Flu

Concern about COVID-19 is only marginally higher than concern about Bird Flu, with higher concern about the possibility of family members catching it (38% for Bird Flu; 40% for COVID) than personally catching it (35% for Bird Flu; 36% for COVID).

**Overall, how CONCERNED – if at all – are you about the following?**



**[NET] CONCERNED**  
(Very/Somewhat)

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE				REGION					
		M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
The possibility of members of your family catching COVID-19	40%	40%	41%	41%	39%	39%	42%	43%	29%	46%	42%	39%	45%
The possibility of you catching COVID-19	36%	36%	36%	37%	34%	35%	39%	39%	24%	43%	40%	32%	39%

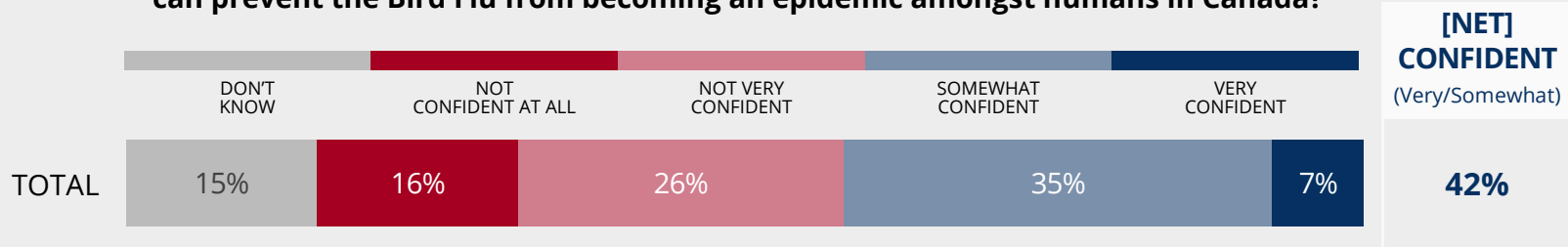


BF5. Overall, how concerned – if at all – are you about the following?  
Base: Split Sample. Total (N=1,750). Data <2% not labelled.

Canadians are divided in their perceptions of the federal government's ability to prevent Bird Flu from becoming a human epidemic. Equal proportions are confident (42%) and not confident (42%), with those who are not confident more likely to hold intense sentiment on this issue.

- Women, those 50 years or older, and those residing in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta are less confident.

**How CONFIDENT are you – if at all – that the federal government of Canada can prevent the Bird Flu from becoming an epidemic amongst humans in Canada?**



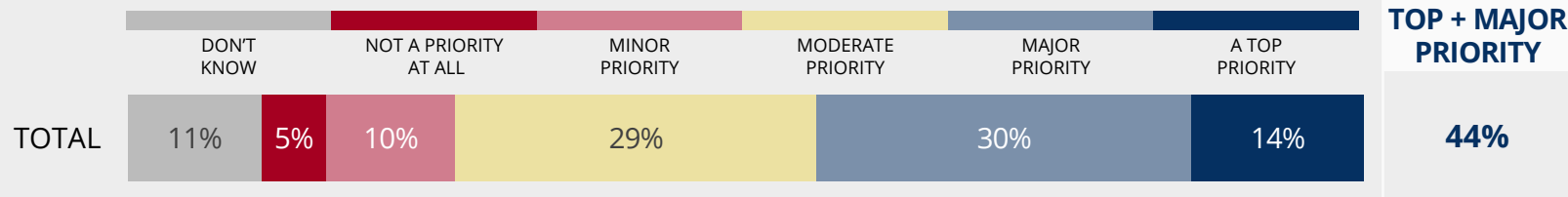
	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE				REGION					
		M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
<b>[NET] CONFIDENT</b> (Very/Somewhat)	<b>42%</b>	46%	39%	41%	41%	39%	47%	41%	48%	41%	35%	37%	42%



# Four-in-ten (44%) Canadians believe that preventing the Bird Flu from becoming a national epidemic amongst humans should be a top (14%) or major (30%) priority for the federal government


- Those aged 50 years or older (49% - 58%) as well as those in Quebec (53%) and Atlantic (49%) provinces are more likely to say it should be a top/major priority.
- Another 29% feel this should be a moderate priority – just 15% feel it should be a minor priority or non-priority.

**How much of a PRIORITY – if at all – should it be for Canada’s federal government to prevent the Bird Flu from becoming an epidemic amongst humans in Canada?**



[NET] TOP + MAJOR PRIORITY	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE				REGION					
		M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
44%	44%	45%	43%	36%	36%	49%	58%	49%	53%	44%	38%	31%	40%





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