

# POLICIES & REGULATIONS FOR A THRIVING CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

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## Poster 16

### CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN CREDECE ATTRIBUTES: THE ROLE OF TRUST IN THE FOOD SYSTEM AND BRANDS

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The broad objective of the study is to investigate consumers' trust in the Canadian food system and in food brands with respect to credence qualities. Given the credence nature of food quality and food safety, consumers cannot verify whether the food is of high quality or is safe to eat, thus they have to rely on abstract systems of regulation and quality signals such as brands to make informed choices. While trust is recognized as a rational strategy to reduce consumers' uncertainty in decision making process, its components and how it affects consumers' perceptions of food is a relatively new research area in Food Economics. In this context, this study explores public trust in the context of food by developing a theoretically-grounded framework in which trust in the food system and brand trust are expected to evolve to consumer confidence in food attributes and lead to consumer commitment to food brands. Grounded in established theory, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed. Data was gathered through an online survey conducted across Canada in July 2012 and focusing on fresh chicken meat and packaged green salad products. Among the key results, brand trust is product-specific: while brand trust matters in fostering consumer confidence in chicken, it is less relevant for salad. Furthermore, trust in the food system exhibits a stronger impact on public confidence than trust in food brands. This subtle difference implies that a credible assurance about the food system's performance is a key element in gaining/maintaining public confidence in food.