

Feb. 2020 - Dec. 2025 Summary Report

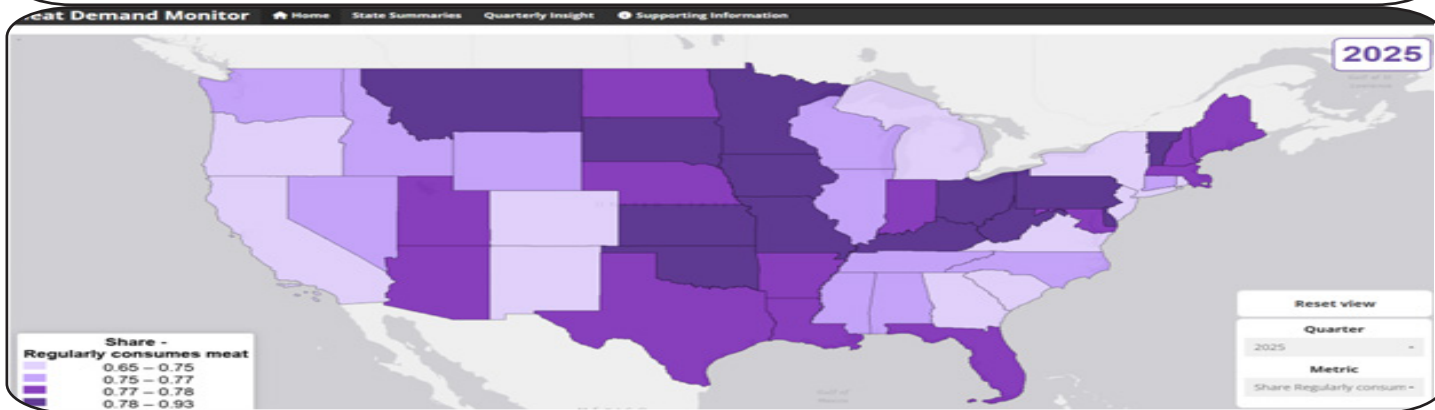
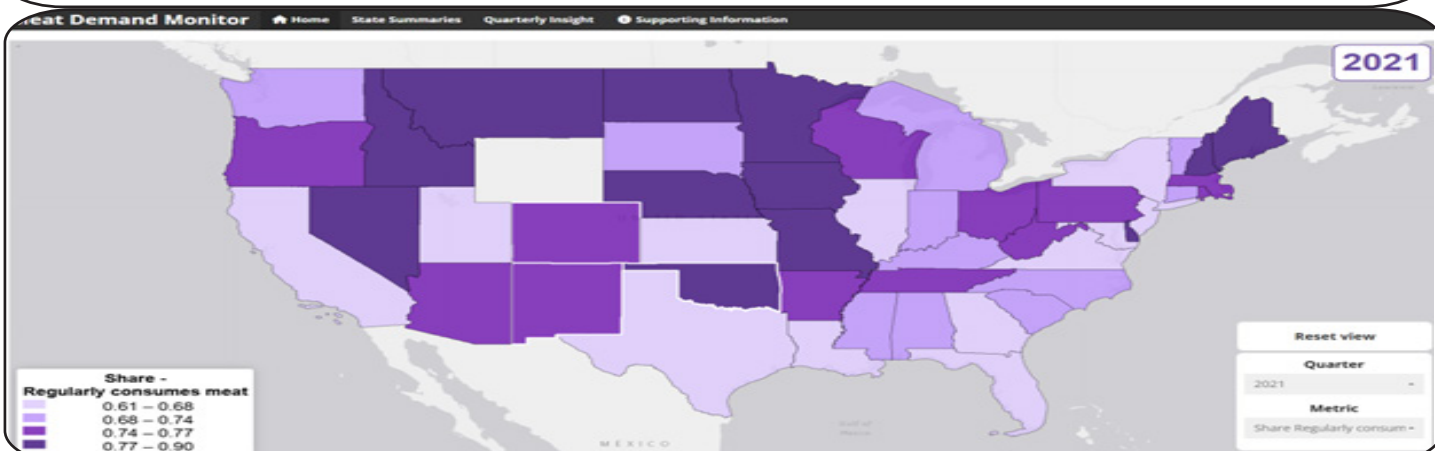
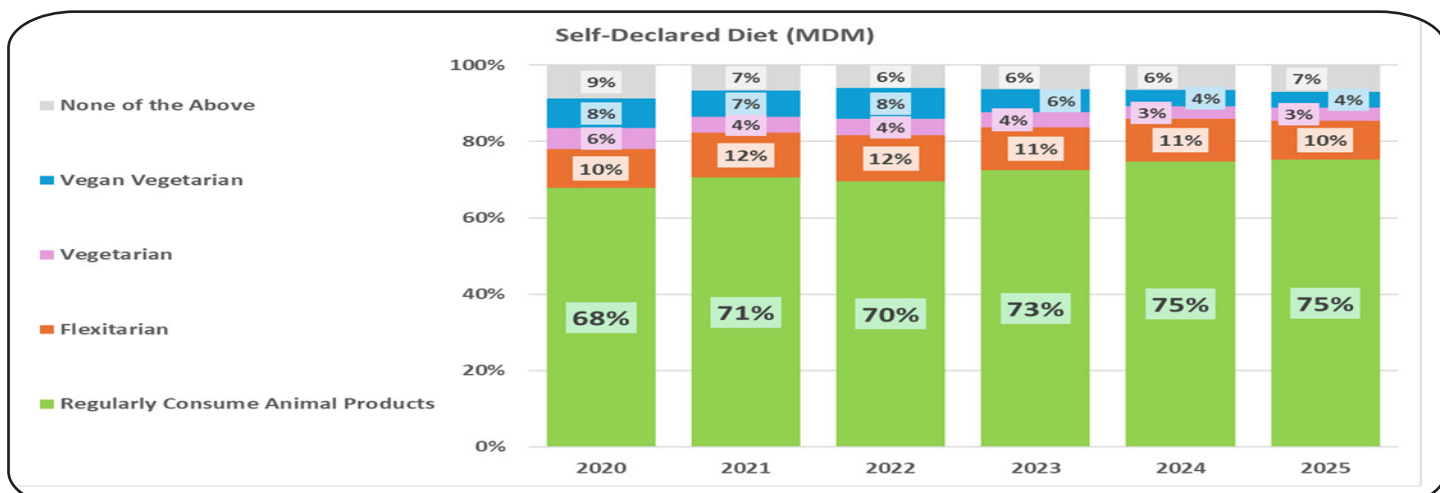
The Meat Demand Monitor (MDM) project was launched in February 2020 collecting data from over 2,000 (over 3,000 in more recent years) U.S. residents each month. The applied survey is designed to be nationally representative and consistent with U.S. Census estimates of population composition. Interested readers can also view the [MDM Project Methodology](#) resource for additional documentation. The MDM project is funded in-part by the beef and pork checkoff programs with a primary objective of tracking U.S. consumer preferences, views, and demand for meat. Everything from this project is completely and transparently available via [AgManager.info](#). This report provides a series of summary details and trends on nearly six years data spanning from Feb. 2020 to Dec. 2025. The resulting rich, household-level data from over 190,000 survey respondents are used here providing a host of findings to enhance understanding and hopefully improve decision-making.

Key insights include:

- Self-declared rates of being a meat consumer have increased while Vegan and Vegetarian rates have declined. Some declaring Vegan and Vegetarian diets also report prior day meat consumption pointing to further lower non-meat diet prevalence rates.
- Regional variation persists in beef and pork meal inclusion with residents in the Northeast trailing South, West, and Midwest residents. MDM meal inclusion rates (a consumption frequency metric) align with often-cited USDA per capita consumption estimates (an aggregate consumption volume metric).
- The source of protein in both at-home and away-from-home meals has broadly been stable. Grocery stores lead at-home sourcing while Quick Service and Casual Dining lead for away-from-home protein sourcing.
- Retail meat demand has out-paced food service, dinner meal demand likely reflecting broader macroeconomic developments not unique to meat.
- Taste and Freshness regularly lead as key protein purchasing determinants. Nutrition and Health have increased in importance consistent with “meat having a moment.” Environmental Impact, Origin/Traceability, Animal Welfare, and Hormone/Antibiotic-Free have declined in relative importance since 2020.
- Cohort differences reflecting household finances are regularly shown to be key factors in beef and pork meal inclusion, the importance of price in purchasing decisions, and in how food expenditures are allocated.
- GLP-1 use is currently one of the most watched food industry developments. MDM-data has enabled timely insights including documentation of reduced meat price sensitivity of GLP-1 users.
- External interest in, and scientific use of, MDM information continues to grow. AgManager.info MDM page views have averaged over 8,000 per year. Included examples document high impact, reach, and relevance.

Self-Declared Diets: Annual Trends and State-Level Insights

Respondents self-declare their diet given five presented response options. Estimates of Vegan and Vegetarian diet prevalence peaked in early years and both have declined. Assessment suggests at times one-half of self-declaring Vegan or Vegetarian respondents also indicate having a meat item in prior day meals - suggesting presented estimates are likely biased upwards. Accordingly in 2021 over 83% were meat consumers with this growing to over 85% by 2025. As a final illustration of diet insights enabled by the MDM, the 2021 and 2025 state-level maps available via MDM's data visualization tool (thanks again to Dr. Justin Bina for building and sustaining that resource) are included below (see: <https://ksmeatdemandmonitor.shinyapps.io/MDMapp/>).

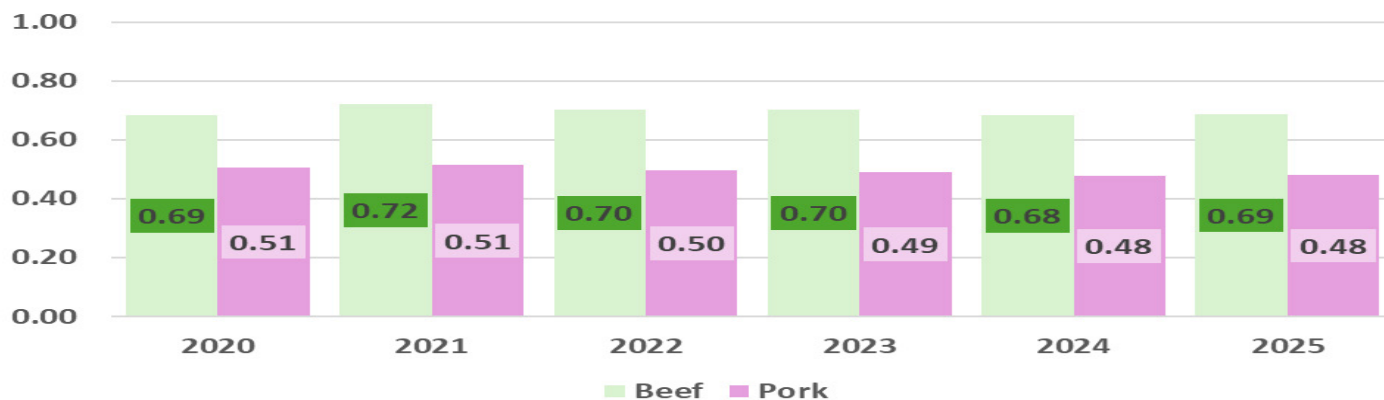


Prior Day Meals - Consumption Frequency Insights

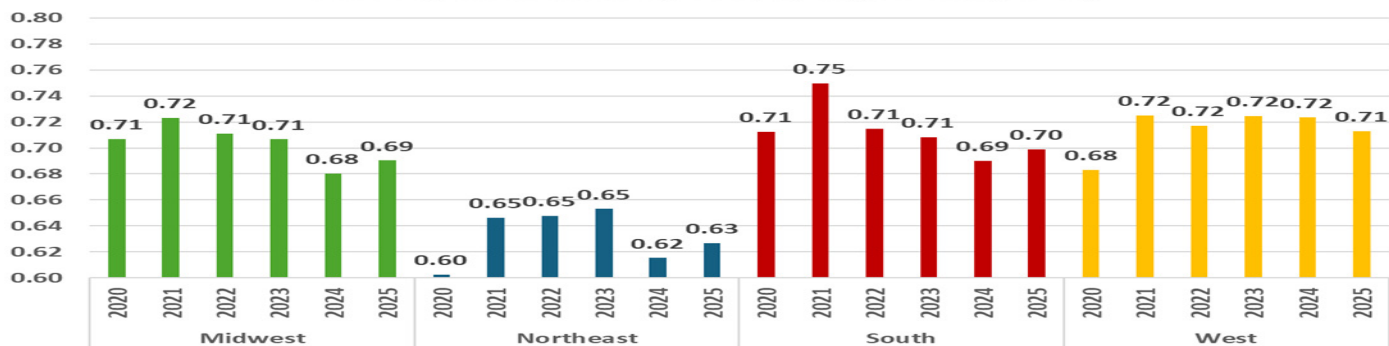
Respondents indicate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner yesterday where they had a meal (or skipped) and what proteins are contained. Monthly reports document beef and pork meal inclusion rates as a consumption frequency metric. This should not be confused with volume such as USDA's per capita consumption estimates. That clarification in mind, observing USDA estimates to range from 58.1 to 59.7 lbs for beef and 49.7 to 51.7 lbs for pork during this period aligns with limited changes in MDM documented prior day meal inclusion.

Regional insights (4-level Census approach) are enabled by the MDM. Prior day inclusion of beef in meals peaked in 2021 in three regions (2023 in Northeast) while pork meal inclusion peaked in 2021 in three regions and 2020 in the South. Beef and pork meal inclusion both are regularly lowest in the Northeast.

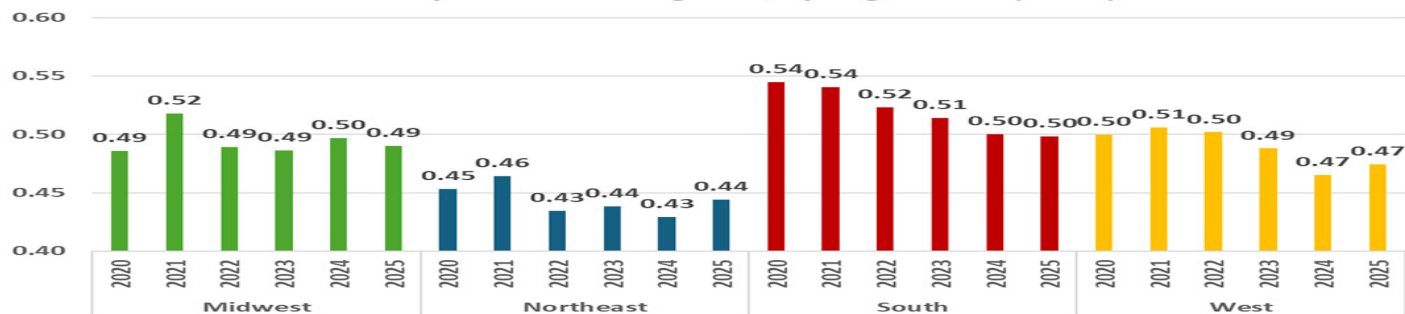
Prior Day Meals, Inclusion of Meat (MDM)



Prior Day Meals including Beef, by Region-Year (MDM)



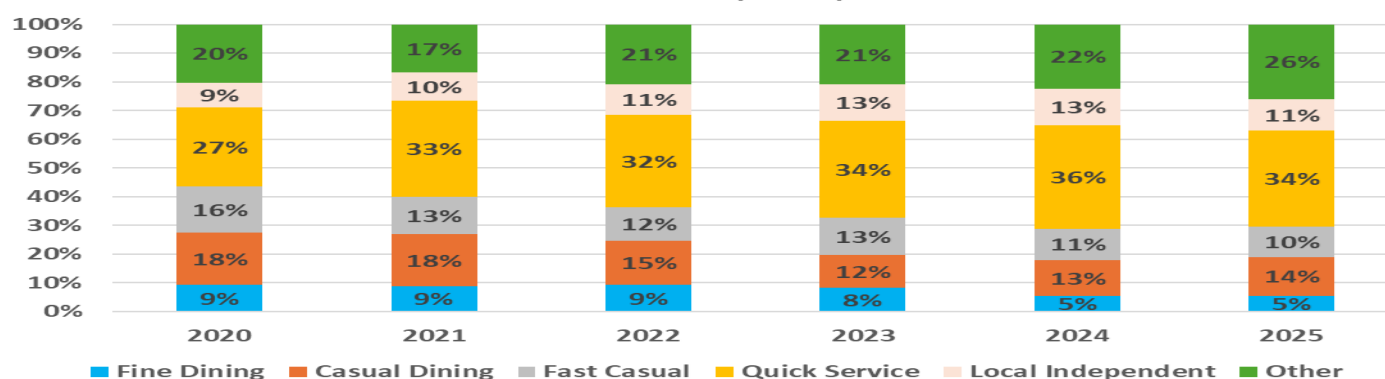
Prior Day Meals including Pork, by Region-Year (MDM)



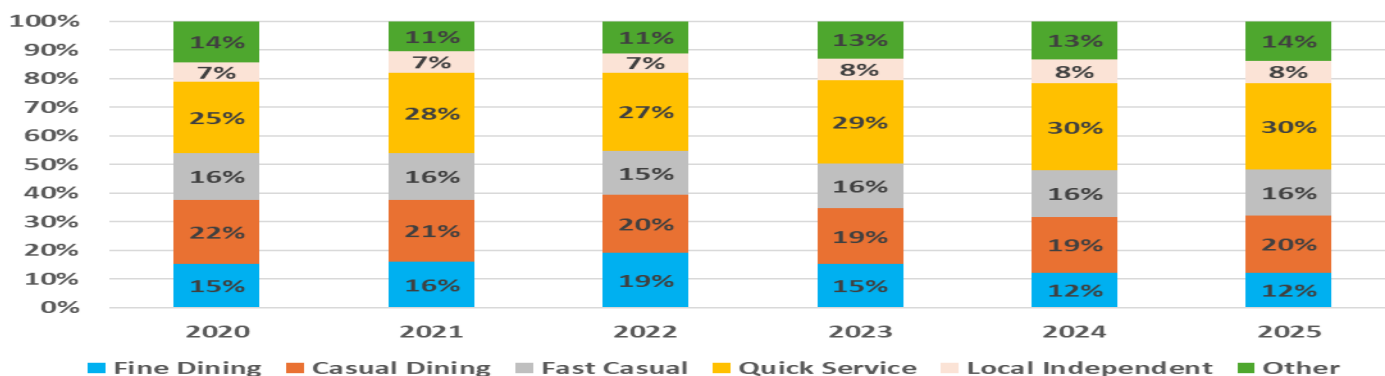
Prior Day Meals - Protein Source Insights

Monthly reports also summarize prevalence of protein sources separately for meals consumed at-home (AH) and away-from-home (AFH). For AFH meals, Quick Service (McDonalds, Subway, Chick-fil-A, etc.) leads for breakfast and has increased share from 2020 levels. Quick Service also leads for lunch (and also gained on 2020 levels) with Casual Dining (Applebee's, Olive Garden, Outback, etc.) and Fast Casual (Panera, Chipotle, Panda Express, etc.) combining for about 1/3 more of AFH meals. Casual Dining leads for dinner meals and is closely followed by Quick Service in all six years.

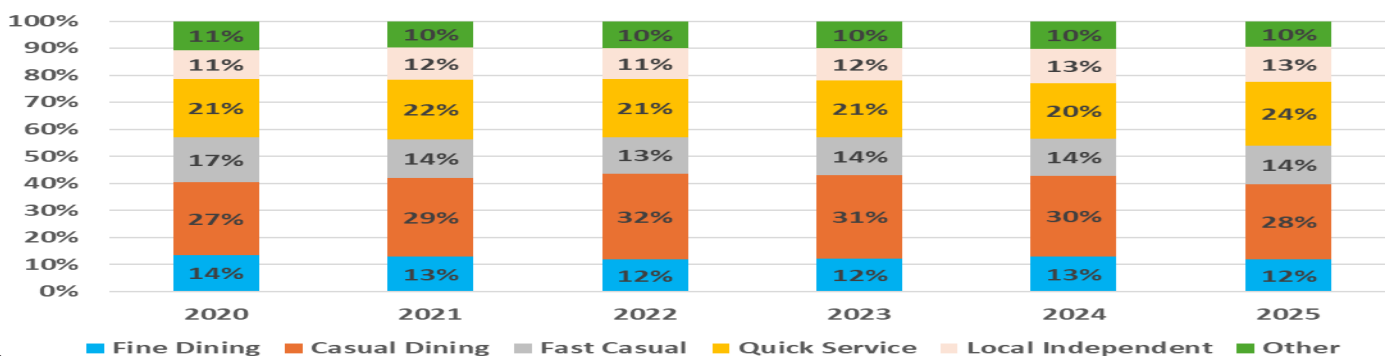
Percent of Away-from-Home Meals by Restaurant Type, Breakfast (MDM)



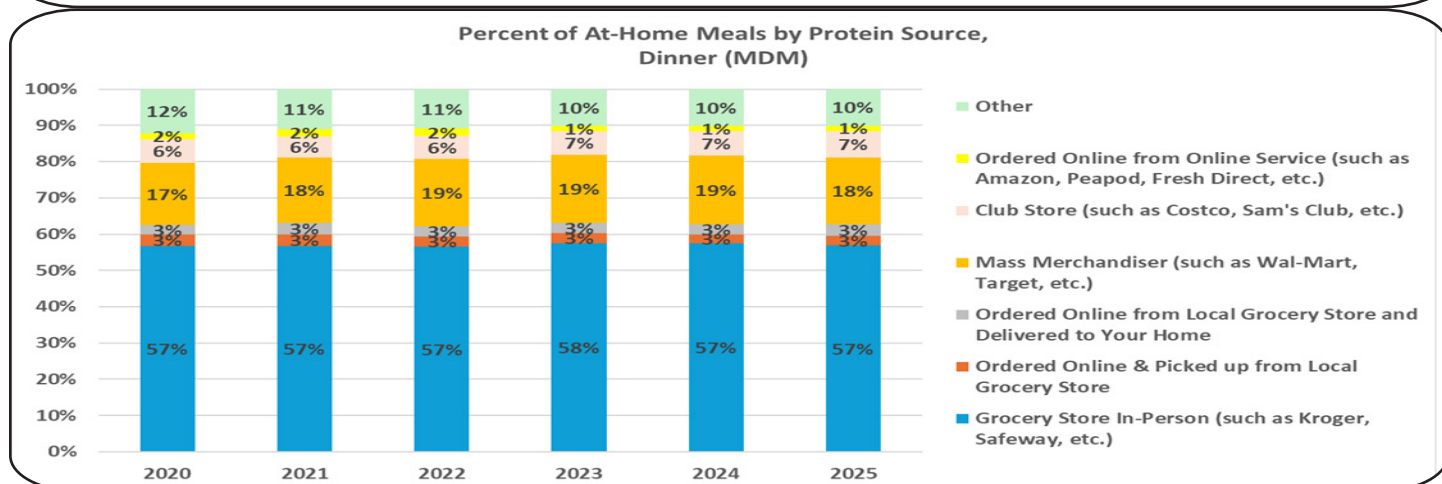
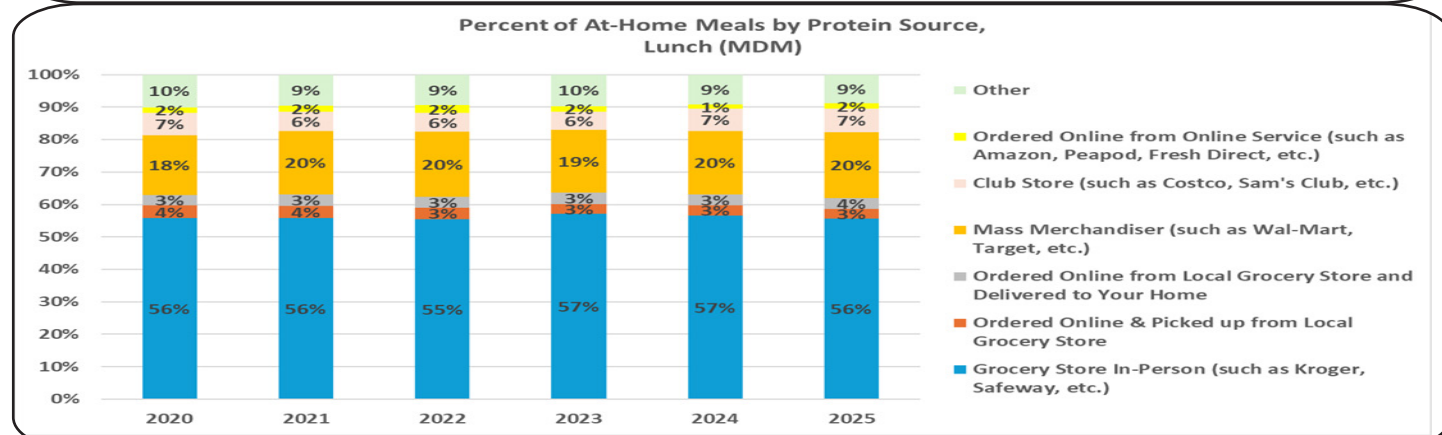
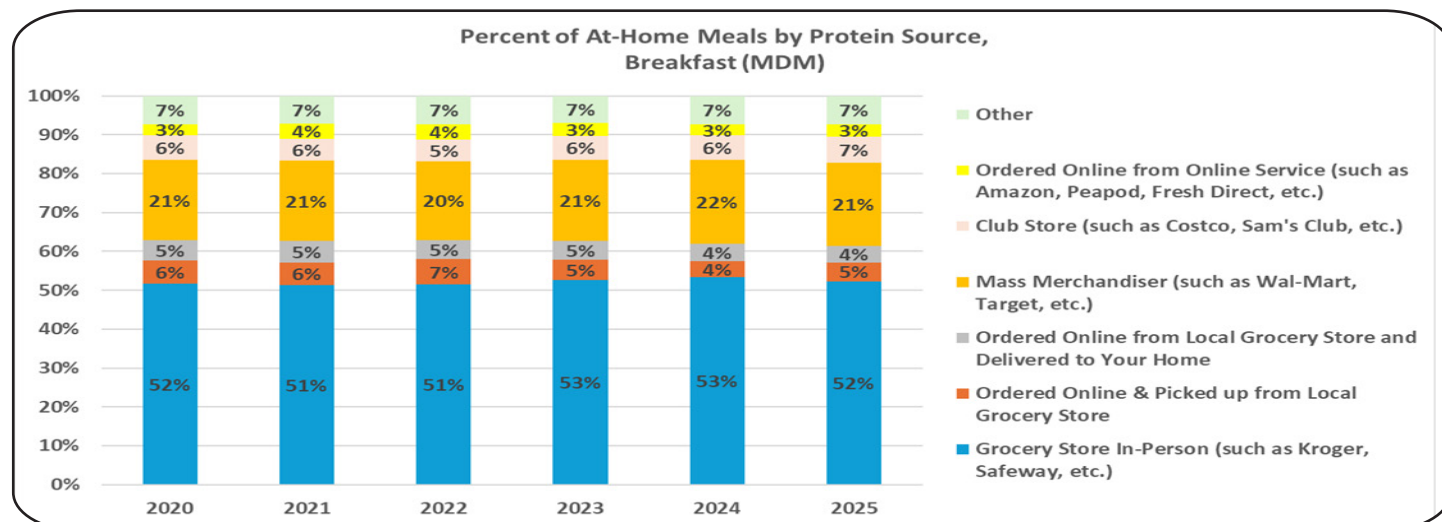
Percent of Away-from-Home Meals by Restaurant Type, Lunch (MDM)



Percent of Away-from-Home Meals by Restaurant Type, Dinner (MDM)



Protein in at-home meals is sourced rather consistently across all three main meals. Grocery stores (Kroger, Safeway, etc.) are the leading source. Combining in-person with online ordering, grocery stores are source of over 60% of AH breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals in each year. During the 2020-2025 period Mass Merchandisers (Wal-Mart, Target, etc.) and Club Stores (Costco, Sam's Club, etc.) were second and third to grocery stores in all three meals.



Willingness-to-Pay: Consumer Demand (not Consumption) Tracker

MDM respondents complete a nine-choice sequence, one-half in Retail, Grocery Store setting and one-half in dinner meal, Restaurant setting, where they indicate protein purchase decisions given intentionally varying offer price combinations. Given the experimental design employed, this provides direct demand metrics as reported in base monthly reports and described more in multi-month reports provided in early MDM years.

Resulting willingness-to-pay (WTP) values are nominal estimates of the \$/lb (retail) and \$/dinner meal (food service) where the typical US resident would be indifferent to purchase. For instance, in 2020 residents were indifferent to paying \$7.26/lb for ground beef in retail and this indifference point increased to \$9.18/lb in 2025. A broad take-home point is WTP values increased more in retail than food service during this period likely reflecting broader macroeconomic developments that were adverse to restaurant foot traffic and not unique to meat protein purchasing. Narrowly, the CPI-All Items index (broad inflation index) increased 24% between 2020 and 2025. Meanwhile, MDM retail WTP estimates for Ground Beef, Bacon, and Beans and Rice all increased by more than 24% pointing to retail demand growth. Meanwhile, none of the eight MDM food service, dinner meal WTP estimates increased by 20% indicating a lag relative to inflation trends. Stated more simply, the percentage change in retail WTP in 2025 vs. 2020 exceeded the percentage change in food service WTPs in all six overlapping MDM cases documenting domestic market channel shifts as they developed.

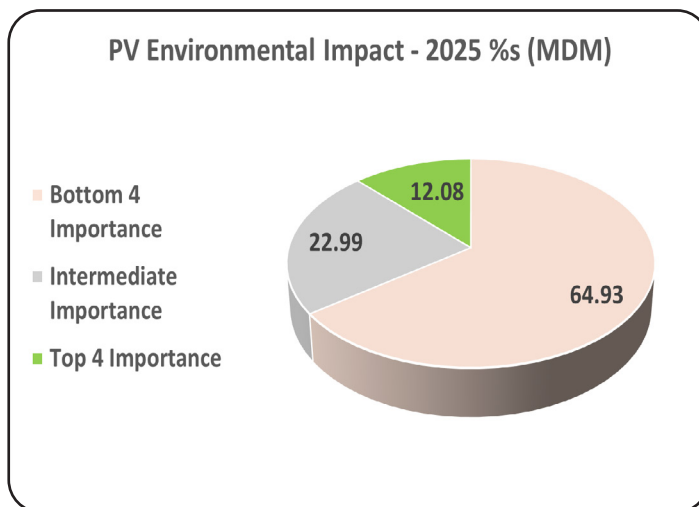
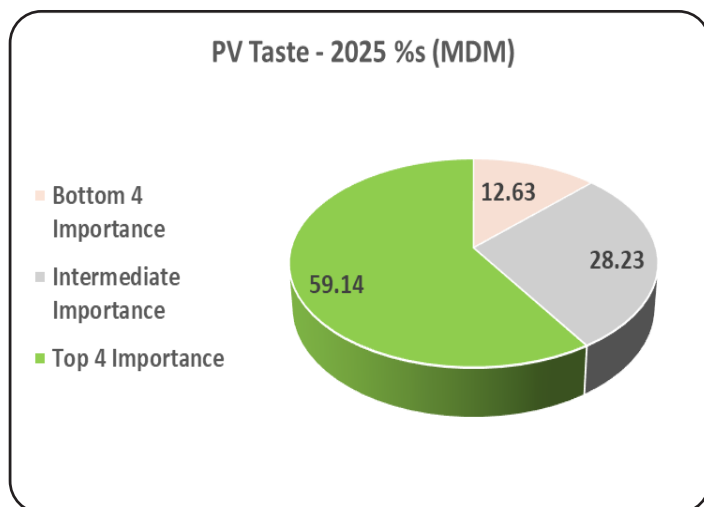
Nominal WTP (\$/Retail lb)								
	Ribeye Steak	Ground Beef	Pork Chop	Bacon	Chicken Breast	Plant-Based Patty	Shrimp	Beans and Rice
2020	\$ 16.11	\$ 7.26	\$ 5.92	\$ 4.58	\$ 7.20	\$ 7.82	\$ 8.52	\$ 1.83
2021	\$ 17.49	\$ 8.43	\$ 7.05	\$ 5.83	\$ 8.20	\$ 8.83	\$ 9.54	\$ 2.86
2022	\$ 17.65	\$ 8.83	\$ 7.39	\$ 6.13	\$ 8.62	\$ 9.01	\$ 9.46	\$ 3.27
2023	\$ 17.45	\$ 8.67	\$ 7.16	\$ 5.75	\$ 8.38	\$ 8.20	\$ 9.31	\$ 3.11
2024	\$ 17.51	\$ 8.61	\$ 7.09	\$ 5.88	\$ 8.45	\$ 8.15	\$ 9.40	\$ 3.21
2025	\$ 17.90	\$ 9.18	\$ 7.40	\$ 6.32	\$ 8.89	\$ 8.20	\$ 9.77	\$ 3.47

Nominal WTP (\$/Food Service-Dinner Meal)								
	Ribeye Steak	Beef Hamburger	Pork Chop	Baby Back Ribs	Chicken Breast	Plant-Based Patty	Shrimp	Salmon
2020	\$ 24.90	\$ 18.16	\$ 13.84	\$ 17.32	\$ 16.71	\$ 12.34	\$ 16.85	\$ 17.34
2021	\$ 26.30	\$ 19.44	\$ 15.20	\$ 18.16	\$ 17.60	\$ 13.12	\$ 17.63	\$ 18.33
2022	\$ 27.47	\$ 20.55	\$ 16.25	\$ 19.01	\$ 18.70	\$ 13.53	\$ 18.54	\$ 19.26
2023	\$ 26.73	\$ 20.19	\$ 15.65	\$ 18.49	\$ 18.11	\$ 13.08	\$ 18.00	\$ 19.01
2024	\$ 26.97	\$ 20.42	\$ 15.97	\$ 18.79	\$ 18.50	\$ 13.03	\$ 18.22	\$ 19.54
2025	\$ 27.17	\$ 20.97	\$ 16.46	\$ 18.74	\$ 18.61	\$ 12.65	\$ 17.99	\$ 19.52

Protein Values: Relative Purchasing Importance

Respondents are provided a forced-rank question presenting 12 items where each participant indicates the four most important when purchasing protein, the four least important, and the four of intermediate importance. This is forced-rank and zero-sum in nature making interpretation relative across the 12 examined factors.

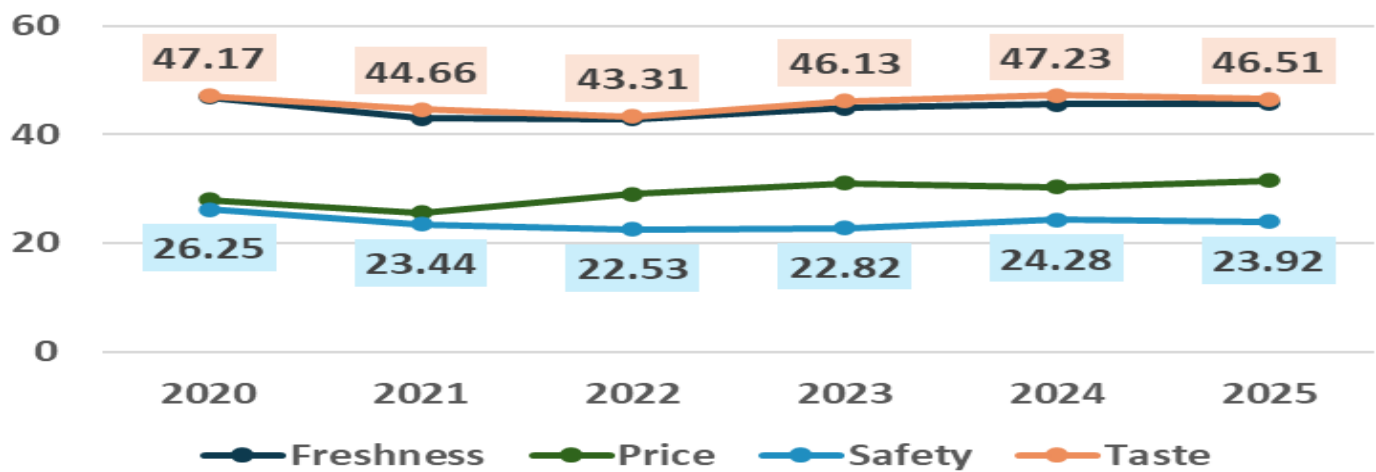
To guide correct interpretation, note the 2025 values for Taste and Environmental Impact. In 2025, 59.1% indicated Taste was a top-4 purchasing consideration while 12.6% noted Taste was a bottom-4 factor: this corresponds with a Protein Value of 46.5 (59.1-12.6). Meanwhile, in 2025 12.1% indicated Environmental Impact was a top-4 factor and 64.9% noted it was a bottom-4 consideration (Protein Value of -52.9).



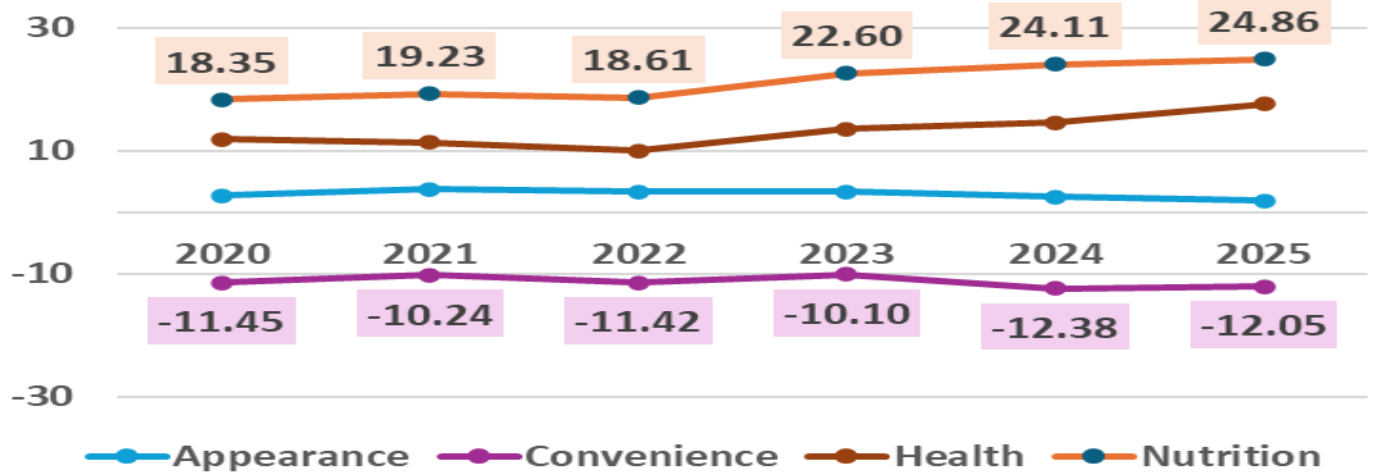
Over the 2020-2025 period the Protein Values were largely stable. Taste (“if product is appealing to the senses including flavor, smell, and texture”) and Freshness (“if product is fresh as indicated by expiration date and visual perception”) regularly appear as top considerations consumers make when buying protein. As intermediate (middle four in ranking) factors, Nutrition (“if product provides essential nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals”) and Health (“if product positively contributes to long term health; including amount and type of fat and cholesterol in the product”) have grown in relative importance marking the main Protein Values change since 2020. This corresponds with the widely documented (both in the MDM and elsewhere), “pro-protein” setting that has developed since the MDM launched in 2020.

Environmental Impact (“if production and marketing of the product impacts the environment”), Origin/Traceability (“if locations and identities of producers are known”), Animal Welfare (“if animal source of the product was raised using animal friendly means”), and Hormone/Antibiotic-Free (“if animal source of the product was raised using added hormones or antibiotics”) have each declined in importance since 2020. While niche markets likely exist for target-marketing of associated claims, collectively this suggests the majority of U.S. protein purchasing decisions are shaped more by Taste and Freshness, and increasingly Nutrition and Health.

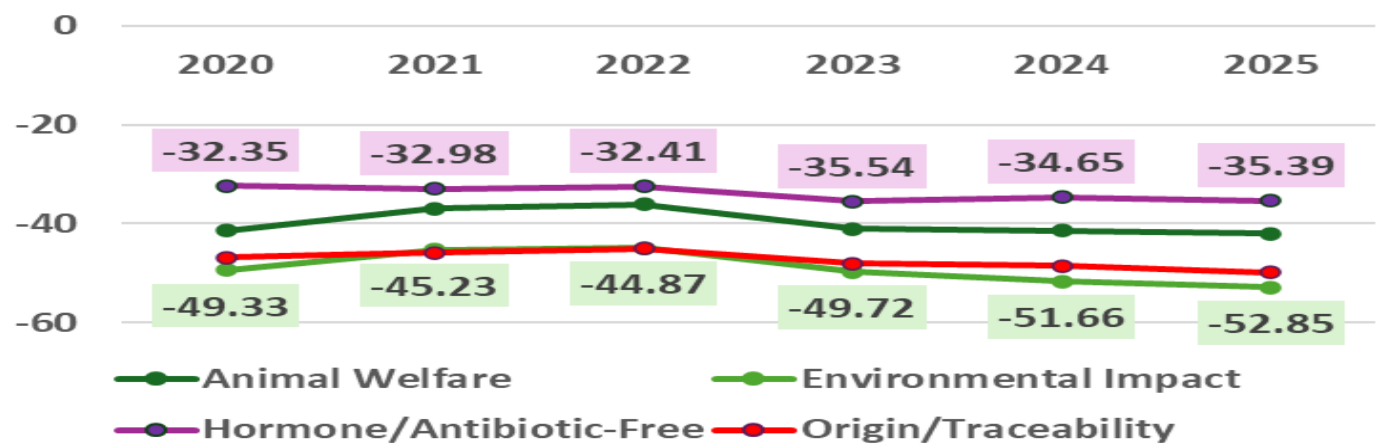
Protein Values - Top 4 (MDM)



Protein Values - Intermediate 4 (MDM)



Protein Values - Bottom 4 (MDM)



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Financial Sentiment: Example of Population Cohort Insights

Building upon the multi-decade impact of Consumer Sentiment as reported by the University of Michigan, the MDM tracks financial sentiment. Consistent with broader macroeconomic discussions, the MDM often reports the population share indicating current household finances are better, the same, or worse than last year. Given the income and wealth effects well documented for meat demand this is both timely and important.

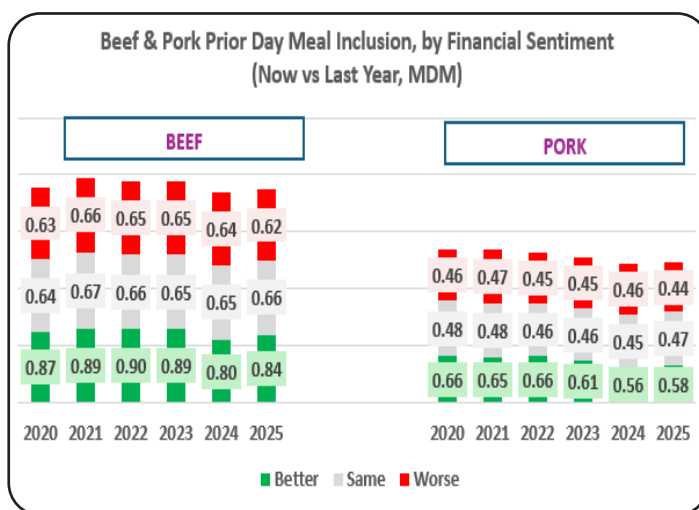
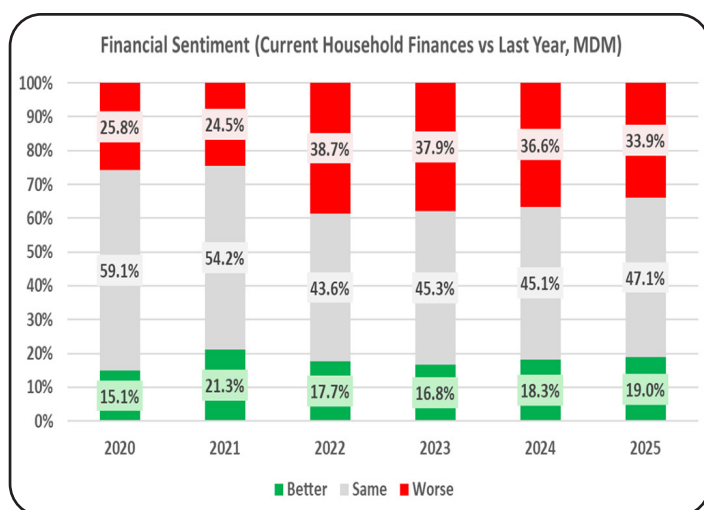
Here we summarize trends in financial sentiment as well as document multiple direct meat demand impacts that follow. Importantly, this understanding is refreshed in a timely manner via most base MDM monthly report updates. Financial sentiment peaked in 2021, likely corresponding with historically-high federal payments to residents and low inflation. Then for the 2022-2025 period financial sentiment deteriorated likely reflecting elevated inflation and broader pessimism documented in other, non-MDM and non-financial sentiment trackers and related “K-shaped economy” discussions.

Beef and pork are included in prior day meals at much higher frequency for households reporting their finances have improved. This is consistent with economic theory and a wealth of consumer demand research documenting meat is a “normal good” - that is consumer meat demand grows with income.

Not surprisingly, the role of Price in protein purchasing decisions is much higher for those indicating their finances have eroded. The notable difference in Price-Protein Value estimates across financial sentiment cohorts points to growing sub-market trends and differences in price-sensitivity across consumers. In fact, the differential in Price’s role was highest in 2025 consistent with elevated “affordability” discussions.

Considering market channel effects, those reporting improved finances spend more on food both at-home and away-from-home. The deeper insight is differences are largest away-from home as households with eroding finances reduce restaurant foot traffic. This aligns with earlier WTP, market channel comments.

As a final external-validity point, MDM estimates of annual food expenditures are highly correlated (0.97 correlation for 2020-2024) with BLS reported values. This is noted to provide additional confidence in accuracy, value, and elevated timeliness of MDM information (e.g. 2025 BLS estimate is expected Sept. 9, 2026).

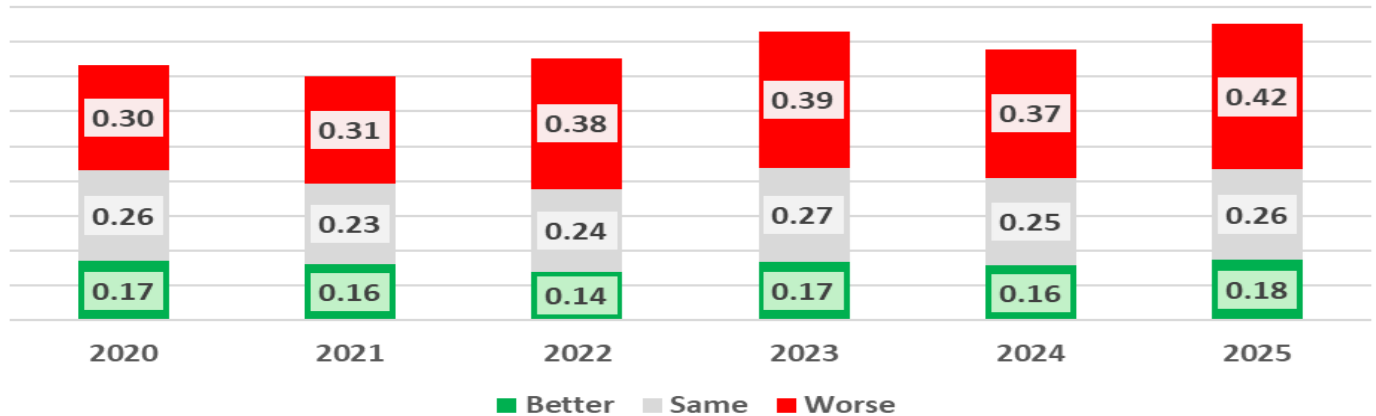


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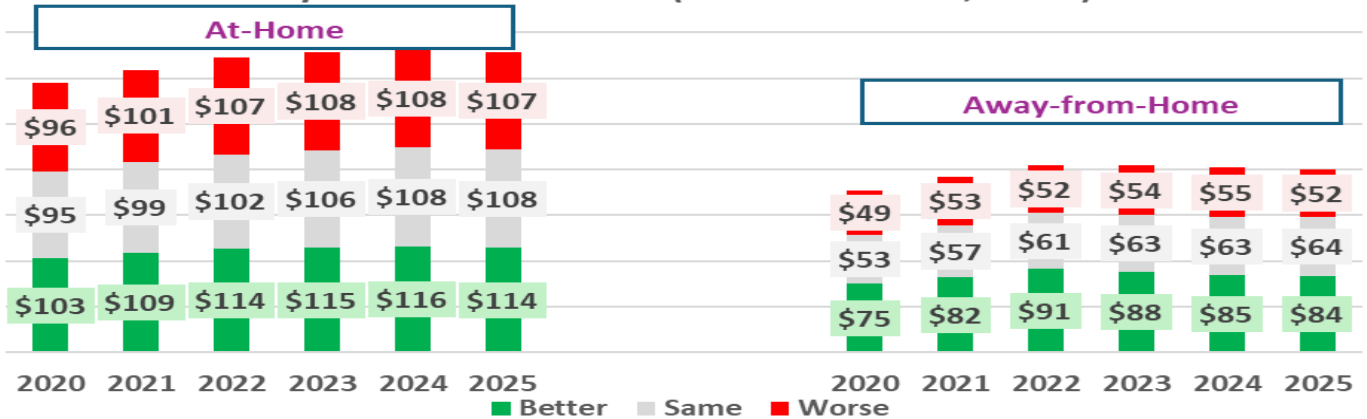
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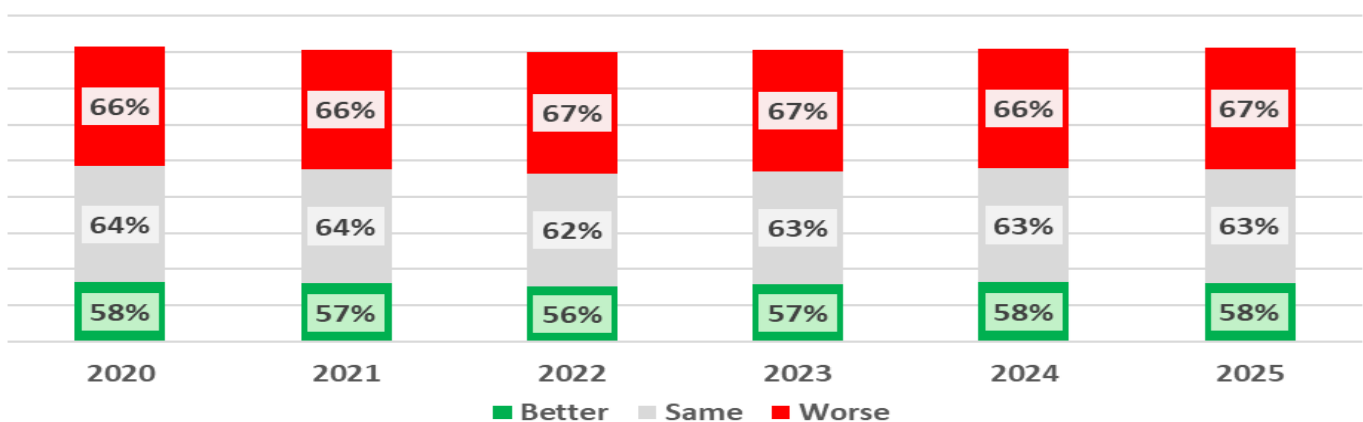
Price - Protein Values (Purchase Importance), by Financial Sentiment (Now vs Last Year, MDM)



Weekly Food Spending, by Financial Sentiment (Now vs Last Year, MDM)



Share of Weekly Food Spending at Home, by Financial Sentiment (Now vs Last Year, MDM)



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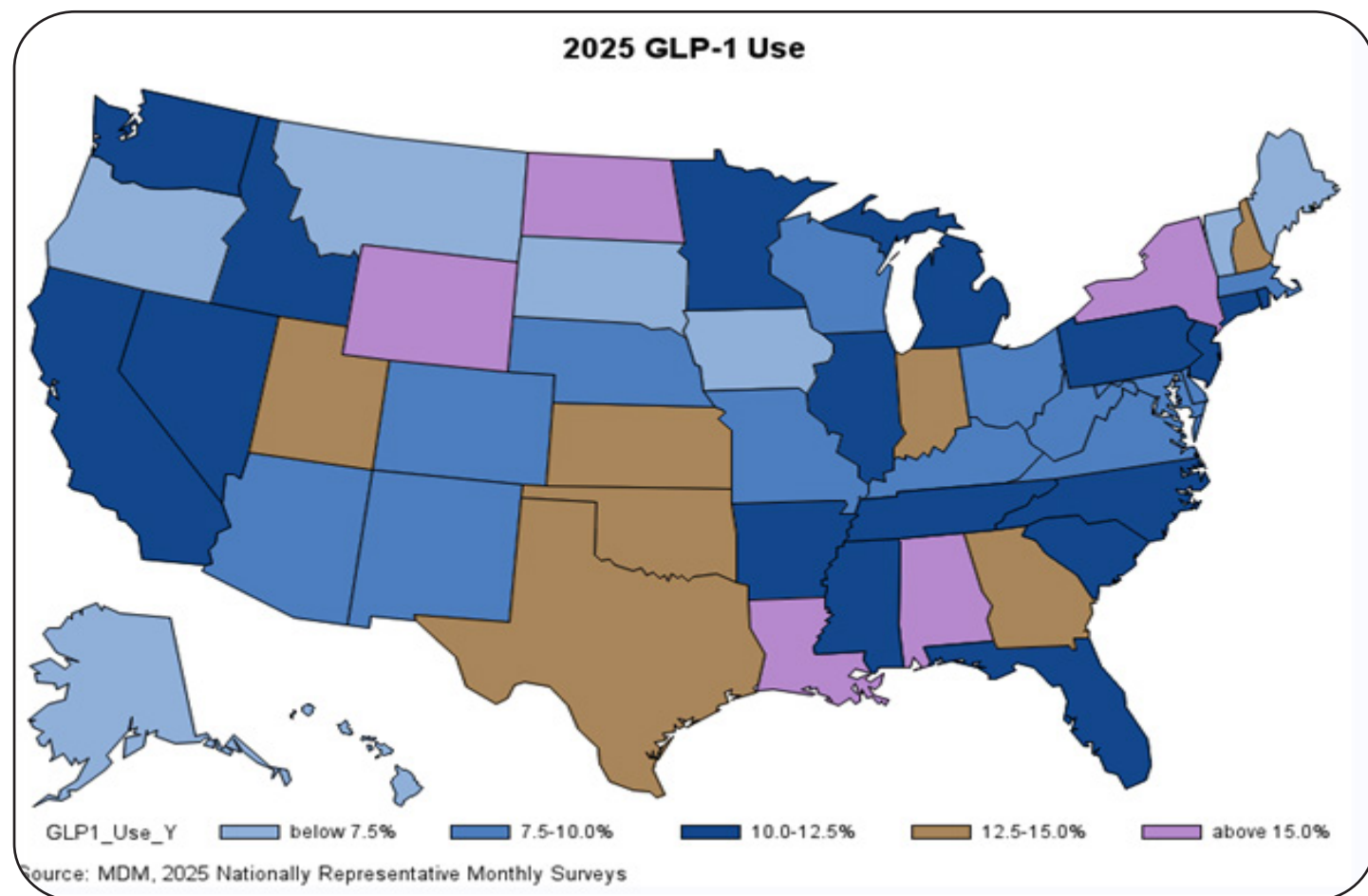
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GLP-1 Use: Example of Timely & Unique Insights

One of the hottest discussion topics in the broader food industry is developments in GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) use. The most recent peer-reviewed journal article using MDM data outlines meat industry impacts from increasing GLP-1 use ([Bina, Tonsor, and Richards, 2026](#)). Here we include a 2025 state-level map of GLP-1 use to provide another timely example of unique and valuable MDM insights.

Note ND (33.3%, n=63) and WY (22.6%, n=31) are shown to have high GLP-1 use rates. This may well be accurate but the small sample sizes (recall monthly MDM surveys are executed to be nationally representative) should be appreciated.

Taken broadly, states in the Southeast have higher self-declared GLP-1 use rates. This aligns with other external estimates for 2024 (<https://www.foxnews.com/health/americas-fattest-states-revealed-how-ozempic-changing-map> & <https://www.glp1newsroom.com/post/glp-1-map-state-by-state-usage>). Moreover, recall above that prior day meal inclusion of beef and pork in the South is above the national average making this a timely observation worth ongoing monitoring. Further, using MDM data Bina, Tonsor, and Richards (2026) show GLP-1 users are less price sensitive - a key and very timely aspect in understanding evolving demand impacts.



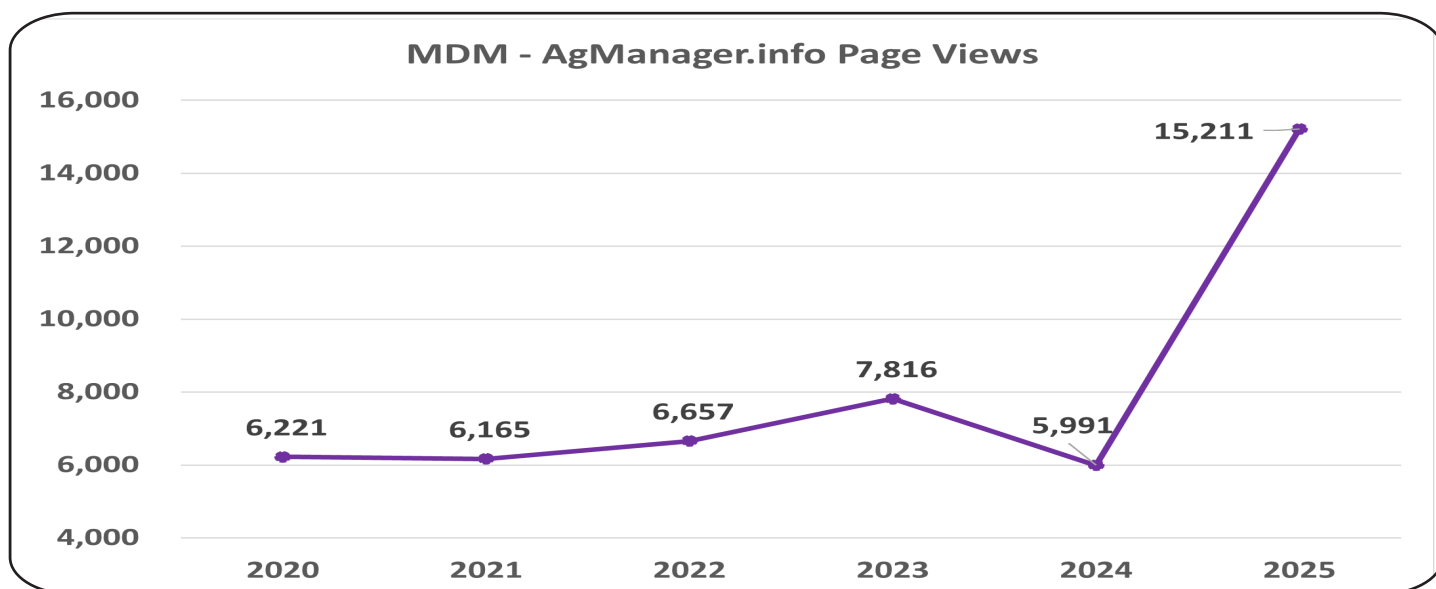
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External Use - Example List of Extensive Use

Since inception, all raw survey instruments and data collected as well as all outputs generated have been posted to a MDM-dedicated page on KSU's AgManager.info. Beyond the clear and transparent provision of said information, this provides one convenient use and impact metric. Narrowly, we have "page view" statistics available for the MDM main page and specific items included. The following chart shows total page views by year demonstrating notable external interest. The annual average for 2020-2025 is 8,010 page views and interest grew notably in 2025.



One of the main objectives since MDM's launch has been wide dissemination of MDM findings and implications. Combining this with Dr. Tonsor's research & extension appointment, centered on meat-livestock economics at Kansas State University, has provided a platform to increase reach, impact, and real-world relevance of the MDM effort. One specific ongoing partnership to highlight is with AoA. Initially with Mike Pearson and now with Jesse Allen as host, Dr. Tonsor provides a ~10 minute overview each month of the latest MDM information and implications. This often is the first public rollout of the latest MDM insights and is a foundational partnership of particular note.

While broader, extensive documentation is not viable to include here, this report contains a list of 30 example external media and producer education uses spanning July 2025 to early February 2026. These are simply examples pulled from Dr. Tonsor's email archives for convenient demonstration of external interest and use validating MDM's relevance.

Moreover, a list of nine peer-reviewed journal articles extensively using MDM data, three K-State dissertations and thesis documents using MDM data, and two governmental testimonies by Dr. Tonsor using MDM data are included for documentation of additional MDM impact and value.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Outlet</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Link</u>
<u>7/6/2025</u>	<u>U.S. Farm Report</u>	<u>World Pork Expo / Meat Protein is Having a Moment</u>	https://www.porkbusiness.com/news/industry/3-factors-fueling-americans-obsession-protein
<u>7/6/2025</u>	<u>Farm Journal's Pork</u>	<u>3 Factors Fueling Americans' Obsession with Protein</u>	https://www.porkbusiness.com/news/industry/3-factors-fueling-americans-obsession-protein
<u>7/16/2025</u>	<u>LMIC In the Cattle Markets</u>	<u>Meat is Having a Moment</u>	https://lmic.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/23/TheCattleMarket/2025/cattlemarkets061625.pdf
<u>7/21/2025</u>	<u>Cattlemen's Beef Board</u>	<u>What's Demand Got to Do with It?</u>	https://www.beefboard.org/2025/07/21/whats-demand-got-to-do-with-it/
<u>7/23/2025</u>	<u>Cattlemen's Beef Board</u>	<u>The Drive in Five – Episode 16</u>	https://www.beefboard.org/2025/07/23/the-drive-in-five-episode-16/
<u>7/30/2025</u>	<u>Associated Press</u>	<u>Ranchers say expanding herds to take advantage of record retail beef prices isn't so simple</u>	https://apnews.com/article/record-beef-prices-supply-demand-drought-350dfe6144daa2c0dc2661da043edd5
<u>8/7/2025</u>	<u>High Plains Journal Live</u>	<u>Beef Cattle Market Situation and Outlook</u>	https://agmanager.info/beef-cattle-market-situation-and-outlook-8
<u>8/11/2025</u>	<u>LMIC In the Cattle Markets</u>	<u>Beef Demand – Key Producer Vitality Driver in 2025</u>	https://lmic.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/11/TheCattleMarket/2025/cattlemarkets081125.pdf
<u>8/12/2025</u>	<u>Farm Journal's Pork</u>	<u>Consumers Confirm Protein is In: Meat Continues to Have Its Moment on the Plate</u>	https://www.porkbusiness.com/news/industry/consumers-confirm-protein-meat-continues-have-its-moment-plate
<u>8/12/2025</u>	<u>AgriTalk</u>	<u>Professor Glynn Tonsor... joins us to talk about the latest Meat Demand Monitor.</u>	https://omny.fm/shows/agritalk/agritalk-8-12-2025-glynn-tonsor
<u>9/15/2025</u>	<u>Meat Institute</u>	<u>Trust, Taste, and Transparency: A Conversation on What Really Drives Meat Demand</u>	https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/trust-taste-transparency-conversation-what-really-drives-1wc8e/?trackingId=czyOB%2B%2FSQgiDmY5%2B1E5Llg%3D%3D
<u>9/23/2025</u>	<u>NPB-USB Innovation Summit</u>	<u>Economist View: How Innovation Can Improve Industry Viability</u>	https://agmanager.info/economist-view-how-innovation-can-improve-industry-viability
<u>9/23/2025</u>	<u>Swine Podcasts</u>	<u>What's Really Moving Pork Prices? - Dr. Glynn Tonsor</u>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hDp-8-2Clo
<u>10/13/2025</u>	<u>LMIC In the Cattle Markets</u>	<u>Public Data & Information – Sometimes We Never Realize Value Until Something Is Gone</u>	https://lmic.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/13/TheCattleMarket/2025/cattlemarkets101325.pdf
<u>10/16/2025</u>	<u>RAC / PPIC Meeting</u>	<u>Domestic Pork Demand and Price Sensitivity Update</u>	https://agmanager.info/domestic-pork-demand-and-price-sensitivity-update

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Scientific Journal	Title	Link
Food Policy	GLP-1 Use and Protein Demand	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306919225002313
Agricultural Economics	Effects of Aerobic and Strength-Based Exercise on Consumer Preference for Protein	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/agec.70060
Q Open	Impacts of Alternative Selection in Multi-Alternative Food Demand Modeling	https://academic.oup.com/qopen/article/5/2/qaof019/8210986?login=true
Journal of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association	Behavioral Correlates of U.S. Retail Protein Demand: The Case of Exercise-Driven Protein Consumption	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jaa2.142?campaign=wolearlyview
Applied Economics Teaching Resources	Demand Dashboards: Interactive Tools to Communicate Consumer Behavior	https://www.aetrjournal.org/volumes/volume-6-2024/volume-6-issue-4-december-2024
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	COVID-19 Federal Aid and Household Food Expenditures	https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-agricultural-and-applied-economics/article/covid19-federal-aid-and-household-food-expenditures/98557CF371FCAA6E68E1AC91C5EA1F958
Meat Science	U.S. perspective: Meat Demand Outdoes Meat Avoidance	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0309174022001115?utm_campaign=STMJ_AUTH_SERV_PUBLISHED&utm_medium=email&utm_acid=80658315&SIS_ID=&dgcid=STMJ_AUTH_SERV_PUBLISHED&CMX_ID=&utm_in=DM256431&utm_source=AC
Applied Economics Perspectives and Policy	Benchmarking US Consumption and Perceptions of Beef and Plant-Based Proteins	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/aep.13287
Animals	Meat Demand Monitor during COVID-19	https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/11/4/1040
Dissertation / Thesis	Title	Link
K-State PhD Dissertation, Bina	Essays on physical exercise as a behavioral determinant of U.S. protein demand	https://krex.k-state.edu/items/cf36b3e6-dcd4-452b-9da4-e80671740426
K-State PhD Dissertation, Anderson	Reference Prices in Consumer Choice for Protein and Impacts of Subsidized Pasture Insurance on Land Value and Use	https://krex.k-state.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/1f9fe719-0032-455d-b09a-41529fd467af/content
K-State MS Thesis, Taylor	Factors affecting beef and plant-based protein consumption	https://krex.k-state.edu/items/57f7ce68-fa91-404d-ba78-83fe00ebf623
Governmental Testimony	Title	Link
U.S Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	Examining Markets, Transparency, and Prices from Cattle Producer to Consumer	https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony_Tonsor%2006.23.211.pdf
KS Legislature	House Agriculture Committee	https://agmanager.info/livestock-meat/meat-demand/monthly-meat-demand-monitor-survey-data/kansas-legislature-house

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<https://www.agmanager.info/livestock-meat/meat-demand/monthly-meat-demand-monitor-survey-data>

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