NCSU Grocery Store Study
Focus Group- 7-1-2016
Wake, Orange, and Durham County grocery shoppers (10)
Start time: 10 AM. End time: ~12 PM

Moderator: Katrina Levine- M
Moderator: Kinsey Porter- M2

Participant- P

M: Okay I’m going to put it in the middle here so try to speak up if you can cause our wonderful transcribers have to sit there and type word for word everything that’s said. It takes them hours and they’re like it’s really hard to hear everybody so speak up if you can just to make sure we get your response because we want to know what you guys have to say. So, again thanks for being here. Um, the first question I want to ask all of you, oh, one more thing too, um, there are no right or wrong answers, that’s important, you know we just want to hear your opinions and if, you know, we say something or kind of frame a question in a certain way I’m not trying to you know direct you in a certain way or get any sort of answer, um it’s just a way for me to kind of find out more about something you said, so um, just remember there are no right or wrong answers just a discussion, so great. Um, so the first question, I kind of want to start out by you know everybody introducing themselves so if you wouldn’t mind stating your name and how often you shop at the grocery store and one thing or type of item that you buy most often. Whoever would like to start. Also please silence your cell phones.

P: I’m [Name of Participant] and I shop at the grocery store an average of 2-3 times per week. Um, one of the main items I buy, well its actually two, are frozen vegetables and fruit.

P: Hi, I’m [Name of Participant], I (coughs), I’m [Name of Participant] and I shop about two to three times a week and the main thing that I purchase is milk and cereal.

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I shop at grocery store 2-3 times a week and the main thing that I purchase is milk and juice.

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I go to the store about once a week. The main thing I purchase is just like eggs.

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I go to the store about twice a week and the main thing I purchase is raw chicken.

P: I’m [Name of Participant] and I go to the store about one or two times a week. I typically buy a lot of fruits or vegetables in the produce section.
P: Hi, I’m [Name of Participant]. I go to grocery store about two times a week or like four, six, six times in a month. The main things I purchase is milkcakes, onions, tomatoes.

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I go to the grocery store probably three or four times a week and the main thing I probably purchase is milk and and bacon (laughs).

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I go, I don’t know, between two and four it depends on the week and mostly vegetables and fruit.

P: I’m [Name of Participant]. I go about once a week and I purchase a lot of unhealthy stuff, like chips and pretzels and stuff.

M: Well awesome, so I hear a lot of several times a week for most of you. A variety of things from the staples like bread, milk, and eggs, to produce, to frozen foods, so awesome, great. Well the next question I have for all of you is which store do you shop at most often and what’s your main reason for shopping there? And anybody can answer.

P: I go to the Food Lion on Western cause it’s the closest.

P: Yeah, Food Lion cause it’s the closest.

P: It’s a toss between Kroger and Harris Teeter. Kroger because it’s the closest and Harris Teeter when they have a super double (laughs).

P: I would say Harris Teeter because of the coupons they give out

P: I typically go to Food Lion because it’s cheaper, or Aldi’s sometimes

P: Ah, usually Harris Teeter cause it open til like you know 24 hours so I can go at 2 AM.

P: I shop at Food Lion most of my time. Anytime I’m getting groceries so I go there once a month because something is not available

P: I shop mostly at Aldi if I’m like in the area, but if not I’ll probably go to Harris Teeter.

P: Um, it’s a tie between Food Lion and Walmart and it really just depends on what I need and if it has it on sale.

M: So, it sounds like a variety of stores. Food Lions, Harris Teeters, Aldis, Wal-Marts. Mostly probably convenience is one of your top choices, cost, and then what’s available for that product so product availability. Okay, awesome.

What other factors do you consider when you’re choosing a store?

P: How clean it is. If I walk in and it smells kinda funny. There are some stores I will walk in and turn back around and I won’t get anything. So.
M: Can you explain what you mean by smells funny?
P: Um, I don’t want to come in and I can smell the, the meat. Sometimes I notice there’s one store in particular I can smell the meat and it, I don’t like that store at all. It’s really strong.

M: Any others? Maybe for cleanliness or any other factors?
P: Freshness I suppose. Like her example with the meat, my Wal-Mart from my hometown, we don’t buy meat there it just doesn’t look fresh and is kind of old looking. Um, and I don’t like the produce at Target (laughs), so

M: What, um, factors do you look for in terms of freshness of meat, like how do you judge that?
P: I guess how brown it is and how much blood kinda comin out of it. I don’t know...

P: Smell

P: ... it just looks pretty nasty at our Wal-Mart.

P: Selection of products and freshness of produce and prices.

M: Any other factors that you can think of?
P: Hours in case in the middle of the night you have to go to Harris Teeter

M: Oh yeah right, you had mentioned that.
P: I typically, I come from an area of the country that is like anti-Wal-Mart so I pretty much don’t touch Wal-Mart. Not because I personally have anything but we just never went to a gram. I didn’t go to Wal-Mart until I was like twenty-two. So like that’s just when I think groceries I never think Wal-Mart unless I’m there and I’m like oh they have food here. But that’s just not something I grew up with so I go to like a traditional grocery store.

P: I think like to me it’s customer service. I like Harris Teeter cause there, everyone’s nice there. Where Food Lion, they’re not as nice. Mainly typical with coupons they’re not as nice (everyone laughs).

P: It’s also nice to have self-check-out cause it’s like faster.

P: Yeah.
M: A lot of just to cleanliness, customer service, how nice they are, you know the hours, how late it’s open, and how quickly you can kind of get in and out of the store and the quality of produce. Okay, awesome.

Um, are there any other thoughts or comments on that question or comment? Um, well let’s move on to the next couple questions. Um, how often do you all prepare meals and for yourself and then how often do you prepare meals for others? And do you prepare meals for others?

P: I typically cook dinner for the week on Sunday, um, for my family.

P: I cook maybe two to three times a week and then once a month, maybe once a month for other people.

P: Uh, usually two to three times a week and usually there’s enough where I can share with a roommate or something like that.

P: I cook like four or five times a week. When I cook its usually about three meals a day. I am staying with two other roommates so I cook for them sometimes when it’s just like easy to make for all. And I do prep some vegetables cutting kind of thing during the week so that I can use it to cook during the week. Like cut all of them Sunday so that I can cook it during the week like Thursday or something like that. So I’d say two to three day a week I cook for others and four or five times myself.

M: What about you [Name of Participant]?

P: Um, I would say like three times a week for myself and I don’t cook for anyone else.

M: Okay

P: I do a lot of meal prep I would say yeah like Sunday I’ll make like chicken or whatever kind of protein I’m going to have throughout the week and cut up vegetables and stuff so I can make stuff, but I make it every day, I’ll just use the ingredients that I already cut up or if I’m doing breakfast. Breakfast Ill usually make every day, but the other meals like I will have cooked earlier. And then sometimes for other people, but mostly just for myself.

P: We’re counting mac and cheese or boxed dinner as like a cooked meal or does it have to be from scratch?

M: The question is prepare meals

P: Prepare meals

M: Prepare meals so however you want to interpret that
P: Okay, well in that case probably four or five times a week I prepare a meal. And sometimes I’ve got leftovers and maybe once a month my roommates and I will like do a dinner.

P: I cook pretty much every day and pretty much there’s always someone that I am cooking for too. So yeah.

M: Does anyone, um, who do y’all prepare meals for? Roommates, family, are there any other like groups of people?

P: Um, book club and sorority sisters

M: Does anyone prepare meals for anyone who is elderly or a senior? No? You guys are shaking your head.
Okay, any infants or babies? Okay.
What about women who are pregnant or breastfeeding? Anyone?

P: I have every once in a while if we have a meal train for a friend who’s had a baby or you know or going through a hard time. Yeah, we’ll do meals and sign up to participate to bring them meals. And then I’ll have to consider what they like to eat or if they have allergies or preferences.

M: Okay. So how about anyone who is like chronically ill? Does anyone prepare meals for people who are sick? Okay.
Any other thoughts or comments on meal preparation? Okay.
You guys are quiet (everyone laughs). It’s a lot more fun the more you talk. Okay, well it’ll get better.
Okay, so the next part I want to show you all some photos. And we’re going to go through each photo and I’m going to ask you some questions about it. And really I just want this to be a discussion so just kind of you know go with it say whatever’s on you mind, um, and these photos, each of these photos was taken in a grocery store, um, they’re not all taken in the same grocery store and unfortunately we cannot tell you which grocery store they were taken in because we want them to remain anonymous. And I want you all to imagine that each photo is something you are seeing as your shopping at the grocery store. And again remember there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to her your thoughts.
Alright M2’s going to slideshow for us.
Okay so tell me what you see in this photo.

P: Salad bar

P: Salad bar

P: Cottage cheese

P: I have no idea what that second thing is. I’d say cottage cheese is on the bottom.
P: Maybe grits
P: Maybe rice
P: Maybe grits
P: Tapioca
P: The fruit looks like it has been there for a while
P: Yeah, it’s a little slimy
P: Yeah
P: How do you see that?
P: Yeah, how do you see that?
P: It’s kind of brown
P: Teach me your ways
P: You see the green up there, it looks...
P: It looks a little brown
P: ... a little wet and icky.
P: Oh, okay. Icky, okay got it.
P: I don’t see the little you know the little shield thingy.
P: Yeah. Sneeze guard.
P: Well the camera, the camera might be below it
P: So I’m hoping that its somewhere and I just can’t see it in the picture. But yeah, I wouldn’t eat fruit and I don’t know what the other stuff is so I wouldn’t get it. I would just have some water and be alright.
P: (laughs)
M: Kind of to your point I also forgot to mention that because these are photos you don’t have that context so you will have to make some assumptions. Um, so just let us know what those are. So, as we go through this discussion. But you said this looks, sorry

P: This looks fine to me

M: What about it?

P: I mean I just don’t see a problem with it. I don’t see that its icky.

M: Um, so that kind of leads me to the next question. Would all of you consider this situation safe or unsafe in terms of food safety and why or why not?

P: It’s probably safe, but I wouldn’t eat it. (laughs) I don’t typically eat fruit from a fruit bar or anything if it’s not acidic like strawberries or pineapple or something because I feel like acidity is safer.

M: And how do you, can you elaborate more on that why you think it’s safer?

P: When I know acidic products don’t grow bacteria as well as more basic products such as it looks like it’s a honeydew or cantaloupe up there, I’m sure it’s one of those.

P: It just doesn’t look visually appealing. You know that look like vomit.

P: Yeah, this stuff isn’t stuff I would eat normally and definitely not at a salad bar.

P: Well the handle is touching the fruit so that means somebody’s hand touched the handle and touched the fruit. So, I’ve had some bad experiences with buffet type style so I’m like ohhh the handle’s touching the fruit. So, you gonna stick your hand in there and grab the food.

M: [Name of Participant] do you want to share what you mean by your bad experiences?

P: Um, I’ve gone to um a couple of buffets and I’ve had some food poisoning issues, so yeah. So, I’m very cautious of those type of situations and I check the grade of whatever.

P: And talking about the handle touching the food, when I am at a buffet I try to grab from the back rather than the front.

P: Yeah

P: Yeah.

M: So it sounds like this looks like a salad bar some sort of maybe maybe a sneeze guard I don’t know. See some sort of fruit and maybe some cottage cheese or something else like
tapioca were not really sure. It looks like you know some of the handles are in the food some are out so that’s also kinda gross to see, but some concerns that you all might have are you know somebody touching the handle and then touching the food, um, others think it looks good, so, some of you would some of you wouldn’t. Is that what I’m kind of hearing?

P: Yes.

P: It’s just hard to tell at a grocery store when the last time they freshened up the food. Like at least if you’re at a buffet restaurant at dinner or lunch time it probably got eaten so it probably hasn’t been out for more than thirty or forty minutes. But, at a grocery store I doubt it’s had that short of a time.

P: Yeah, they usually put it out in the morning and then leave it there all day.

P: Right, you’re like get in a cooler. It’s like taking cottage cheese out in a Ziploc bag to the beach and putting it in your cooler and being like there’s cold eater in there it’ll stay good.

P: I mean that’s another thing you can’t tell from here if it’s one of those that you plug in and it stays cold or do they just throw a tray of ice in there and has ice melted and your hoping that the cottage cheese is okay?

P: I guess I look at it and I don’t think as much as a safety issue, I think more of a quality I guess because I’ve never had a bad, a food poisoning experience from a buffet. I’d say maybe it might taste bad, but it’s probably safe. For me like over time if it’s out for another day I might be worried about safety, but like I’d probably more consider it a quality issue except for you pointing out the handle touching the fruit, now I can’t go to buffets

P: (All laugh)

P: Sorry

P: No, it’s such a good observation though like yeah somebody’s hand touched that

M: Can you elaborate a little bit more you said like it wouldn’t necessarily be a problem in terms of safety, but quality and how you’re, what’s the difference between the two

P: So quality wise I figure the flavor might not be as great. There might be microorganisms that are causing some flavor changes especially in the cottage cheese products, some like fat oxidation could be natural like things that are naturally going on in the food that don’t have to do with pathogenic bacteria. So, it might not be as pleasant to eat, but it’s not going to make me sick. So, you know when you smell something and your like that doesn’t smell right, but it’s probably still okay.

P: (Multiple Participants laugh)
P: You see I’m a visual person, so if it doesn’t look visually appealing, I’m not gonna eat it. I don’t care how good you say it tastes, how it smell, if it does not look good, I’m not gonna eat it.

**M: How do you judge like whether or not it’s good?**

P: Like that does not look tasty, it does not appeal to my visual senses

**M: And like what about it specifically?**

P: First of all, I’m gonna eat none of that fruit. And that cottage cheese look like I said, like vomit (laughs). So, and I have a texture thing, so it looks slimy to me. It has that you know it would be really slimy in my mouth, which would make me throw up.

P: But you can’t really tell what it is. That’s why I probably wouldn’t get it because I’m not really sure..

P: (laughs)

P: ...what it is

P: It looks, there’s no sign

P: Even if I saw a sign it still doesn’t look that good

P: I mean I guess because you know we cook, so we know what fresh fruit is supposed to look like...

P: Right

P: ... when you cut it versus it’s been sitting out there and it’s got bruise and it shouldn’t be that color, so yeah, I wouldn’t, no

**M: What about you [Name of Participant]**

P: Um, I mean if its left open like if there’s no door over those things I probably wouldn’t eat it.

**M: And why is that a factor for you?**

P: Because fruit that’s cut open has like flies and if it’s been out all day at least one or two should be there

P: Laying eggs and growing stuff, ew
P: And going off what he said, I mean there’s probably a lot of people at least in grocery stores moving through, so they’re carrying in bacteria’s and stuff from outside and hair even and the air

P: And let’s keep it real, some little kid ran up there and grabbed something

P: (laughs)

P: It’s true

M: So I’m hearing a lot of, um, concerns for like how long the food’s been sitting there, maybe not sure if it’s cold enough or what the temperature is. Um, also kind of this idea of it being sort of open and exposed, we don’t know, there may not be something over it and people can just walk up and grab something or stuff floating around or where flies have been. And this idea of it not being appealing or some of you may not buy this food anyway it sounds like.
Okay, well so if sort of along those lines if you were shopping on that particular day would you purchase the food shown here and why or why not?

P: No, my visual

M: Not visually appealing?

P: No

P: I wouldn’t eat those fruits

M: Okay

P: It’s not something I would buy normally and definitely not in a buffet

P: Even if I was going to get cantaloupe it’s a lot cheaper to guy buy cantaloupe

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

M: Mostly nos, some for it. Some of you don’t like it, it doesn’t look appealing, it’s not something you would buy or its more cost friendly to just buy it yourself and cut it up. Okay, cool.
Um, would you purchase anything in this store department? So I guess this is, I’m not sure what you would call this store department, but that area of the store. Would you purchase anything else that is from this store department?

P: What would that department have?

P: Maybe if it was like a salad bar and if it had like spinach that didn’t look super bruised or old maybe I could make a spinach salad or something like that

P: You’d have to look and smell

P: Would the deli included? Like where they cut up meat for you, would that be in this department?

P: Probably so

M: I guess you can make that assumption. I can’t tell you either or, so

P: Well I mean, we buy meat from the deli, like lunch meat

P: It all depends on how it looks

P: If I got there as soon as they’re putting it out for the first time, yeah

P: Its four o’clock in the afternoon, probably not

P: No, cause at Harris Teeter they put stuff out at four o’clock

P: That’s true, but Harris Teeter changes it all throughout the day

P: Based on the look of that photo, I mean I do get salad bars at places like Harris Teeter and based on the look of that I would assume the salad bar would be safe and organized. And like it’s not messy, there’s nothing on like the stainless steel there, like it doesn’t look like it’s been messed around a lot and I would probably purchase other things like if that’s just a snapshot of a portion of the whole like cold bar I guess is what you would call it I would probably purchase. But I, I don’t do fruits or dairy really in those things, but I will do like salad items.

M: So it sounds like some no, some yeses, depending on what’s available and maybe how long you know it’s been sitting there and that sort of thing. Okay.

Um, would you purchase anything in this particular store and why or why not?

P: Yeah

P: Probably not
P: Yeah

P: It depends on the grade

M: What's that?

P: It depends on the store’s grade. Um, if you are borderline. If you have a B and its possibly a C because you know you just took the inspection I’m definitely not gonna purchase there because there’s a lot of reasons that you have the grade that you have. So

P: Have you seen a store with less than an A cause I don’t think I ever have.

P: I’ve seen a B

P: Oh yeah I've seen a B

P: B’s are bad

P: I think it depends on what your buying. Like if its produce see I probably wouldn’t buy it if something was low grade, but if it’s like a packaged product from a you know one of the major brands the stores not gonna affect that, so

P: If I walk in and it’s a B I don’t even think just cause its packaged and sealed I’m just gonna walk out cause I mean it’s like she said I’ve had bad experiences with food poisoning so I’m not gonna just test it just because. It’s too many grocery stores on the block that you can pick and be okay

M: [Name of Participant] would you be willing to share more of your experience?

P: For food poisoning? Oh. Um, my food poisoning experience caused me to end up in the hospital because I was extremely dehydrated, I passed out, um it was bad. Um, and it was one of the workers at the establishment, they were sick, they had food poisoning. At that time everyone had seemed to have that stomach virus in North Carolina and yeah it was horrible. I never want to experience that again. So, I’m really cautious with the things that I’m around now.

M: Okay, so it sounds like most people would say it depends on what the, maybe what the sanitation score is, or you know yes I would or maybe not the produce but maybe more of the packaged items. Okay.
And would you do anything in response to seeing this photo?

P: No

P: Probably just walk on by
M: So it sounds like most of you wouldn’t do anything?

P: Yeah

P: Just keep chucking

P: No

M: So it sounds like most of you wouldn’t do anything?

P: Yeah

P: Just keep chucking

P: No

M: Okay. Um, and would seeing this at a particular store affect your impression of the store or company and why or why not?

P: Probably not because we don’t, we do have developing in the stores so I don’t think like that

P: Yeah, this photo doesn’t necessarily lead me to think like there’s anything grossly wrong with the store. Like I can’t remember if we said it’s not like there’s cottage cheese dripping on the edge and you know cantaloupe in the honeydew and honeydew in whatever that other thing is (laughs). It’s not something, it’s something I would go over and say hmm I’m not going to eat this, but it’s not like I would say I’m never shopping at this store again or I’m staying out of this area. It’s not like across that threshold of terrible.

P: Yeah, usually I think of salad bars as kind of an afterthought in the store or you know I think they just kind of put them there because they have to to not because that’s, most people don’t go in I don’t think to go to a salad bar

P: It’s like well get hungry shoppers maybe. Maybe somebody will see it and not wait to buy the cantaloupe and cut it

M: Okay so I suppose you know most of you would just walk on by and not really do anything and things are okay otherwise. Okay, um, so any other thoughts or comments on this picture? You guys are quiet. I should start talking, which probably would accomplish because we need to speak up. Um, okay so well move onto the next photo. Okay, so tell me what you see in this photo.

P: Is it a pet store?
P: First of all that says dog bones

P: Is it a pet store?

P: But, no they got deli over there

P: Yeah, what I think what it is..

M: Keep in mind all of these are grocery stores

P: They have dog bakeries, they might have, it might be a dog place cause they have like, they have like Wolfgang bakeries like where you can buy like cupcakes and cakes and stuff

P: I think it’s just a regular pet store

P: Its probably just a deli or something

P: It could just be the leftover bones that people wouldn’t want to buy and there like here have it for your dog

P: Cause its...

P: It has a picture of a dog with a bone in its mouth so I think they’re for dogs

P: Well yeah

P: Well yeah

P: I think they’re wording is just off

P: Well I think ...

P: So you think they’re for humans?

P: No, no, no that’s not what I’m saying (everyone laughs). I think that that that is awful wording cause it looks like that if you read it I think you put a dog bone for sale. Like it...

P: Well its got ..

P: ...Like it’s got a piece of a dog for sale. Like...

P: Oh

P: Ohh
P: But I mean the...

P: ...Like that’s a great dane bone

P: Yeah

P: Yeah like large dog bones. It’s a large dog bone

P: Small dog bones are okay

P: What kind of dog is that, yeah

P: See I see that and I think they butchered this animal in house and they have a large bone they’re going to sell it for someone who has a dog and wants to bring the dog bone for their dog. And I’m like okay that’s a traditional butcher. Like they actually are you know breaking down the whole animal or half an animal in house instead of bring all of those pieces already broken down.

P: But it’s on the counter, it’s just...

P: Yeah it just looks disgusting

P: And it’s not for human consumption

P: Right

P: And I’ve heard that’s the best thing for a dog, you know the fresh not processed bones

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah, okay

P: Although behind the sign the counter doesn’t look all that clean. Like the white isn’t, it’s kind of grayish

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: It’s just out
P: Like is it white or silver?

P: But it’s just out there it’s not wrapped

P: But it’s a bone

P: It’s just a dog bone

P: I don’t care

P: And it’s for a dog

P: So either, either they have a raw meat bone sitting on the counter...

P: Right

P: ... Or if its cooked then you should give that to your dog, so

P: So either way it’s wrong

P: So

P: Yeah

P: Also there’s a sign just kind of just chillin there like you know no one bothered to put the one on the counter. 12.99 or something

P: Yeah, 1 something 9 per pound

P: Oh yeah I think it’s the same sign. I think it’s the same number

P: No that’s that’s. Oh yeah

P: Yeah, this is all, it’s just thrown up there

P: But it’s like set up

P: And then you got that raw cooked whatever it is, you’ve got deli fresh over there. So I, they got this whole cross contamination thing going on

P: It’s a human, it’s a human place though cause they got cans of soda or beer or something over there
P: Yeah, but I’m, and then they got the deli fresh deli right there so I’m getting the whole cross contamination thing going on

P: And then there’s like salad some sort of said

P: But I mean, I guess I’m trying, I wouldn’t look at it as cross contamination because it’s just there’s not meat on it, it’s mostly just the marrow or the bone

P: I don’t give a flying fig, its unwrapped and uncovered

P: See I figure you know any contamination you know. You got to a deli or a you know probably butcher and you buy something then you’re not gonna just eat it, you’re gonna probably cook it a lot of times, especially from a butcher. So if I’m gonna cook it, it’ll be alright anyways. As long as it, especially from a butcher it’ll be fresh. That’s my thoughts

P: The place just doesn’t look clean to me.

P: Just the bags

P: Yeah I probably wouldn’t shop there

P: Oh that’s the bags that you put the yeah okay

P: I might buy the bone for my dog but I wouldn’t buy something for me

P: For myself, yeah

P: I don’t have dogs, I just think that’s disgusting

M: So it sounds like bones for dogs as opposed to bones from dogs (everyone laughs) were sitting up here on this counter and there’s like stuff underneath it, maybe soda or beer, and something else over there. It seems to be like in a deli so there’s kind of some concern for the bones being unwrapped and open and left out there. Also this idea of cross contamination could be happened. Could smell, maybe the color back there something about it being dingy.

P: And mentally it looks like it may smell. And that ice, it reminds me of a fish market.

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah
M: Okay, um, so, would you consider the food showed in this photo to be safe or unsafe in terms of food safety and why or why not?

P: You’re talking about the bones or all the food?

M: The food shown in this photo
P: So the bottled water there is probably fine.

P: Yeah the canned products are probably fine. I might wipe it down with Lysol before drinking it, but

P: There’s no way I’m buying that

P: I wouldn’t drink that

P: I mean even though the bone is supposedly, hopefully has been cooked and everything, you don’t know what has seeped into that ice that is below it over time and then you have those cans in there. Just too much.

P: It just doesn’t look clean. It’s a little dingy.

P: But as I said, I would give it to a dog. I mean it’s okay, they eat stuff out of the trash anyway, so

P: You would give that to a puppy?

P: It’s a bone!

P: Yeah, like it just a bone

P: It’s just a bone

P: I’m from a farm, and my dogs eat worse than this

P: Yeah, it’s a bone

M: So it sounds like a lot of you wouldn’t buy anything. Some of you would use Lysol to wipe the tops of the cans of whatever is underneath there. Um, also some of you are saying stuff like that the bones are grimy and you wouldn’t give it to your dog some would. Anything else?

P: Buckets

P: I think if its deli it’s probably not okay, but if it’s a butcher it’s probably fine.
M: And um what do you kind of see as the difference between a deli and a butcher?

P: Well I think a deli does more lunchmeat and that kind of stuff, which you’re gonna eat raw. But a butcher is usually stuff your gonna cook and it’ll be fine anyway.

M: [Name of Participant] your nodding?

P: Yeah that’s kinda my thing like I don’t like to mix my raw food and my ready to eat food in the same vicinity...

P: Cross contamination

P: ... Like if there’s not enough separation like a countertop isn’t enough separation to me. Like lettuce that I might eat and a raw dog bone

P: So you might eat that too?

P: Exactly, its all ready to eat

P: So you don’t want to contaminate it with the lettuce?

P: Exactly

M: Okay, awesome. So kind of this idea that um if you’re gonna, it doesn’t matter as much if you’re gonna cook it you know as opposed to getting beef or a ready to eat food and then you know this potential cross contamination in mind isn’t good. Okay, um, would you purchase anything or in the store department?

P: No

P: I mean if I just had to like if it was packaged by a big company like a box of cereal I know that the company made sure the cereal inside that is safe as long as the package didn’t look damaged. But I would prefer to go elsewhere.

P: Absolutely

P: Assuming this is a shop that sells meat for humans and pets. I don’t think I could. When you walk into the store it’s like it’s face side it’s on your view almost so I probably wouldn’t know if it’s the right temperature

P: If it had something that I was looking for and I really didn’t want to go to another store I’d probably just buy it there. Like for example were talking about packaged food. Like if this is a butcher/fish section and there’s packaged smoked salmon like that’s fine its vacuum packed.
But I mean if there’s really something that I need and if it’s like a local place I think that in my mind trumps the look of a non-dingy store. If it’s like a small family business I think they’re not gonna put the money into paint the walls and get rid of that cream color. But they’re butchering practices might be fine so I would take that into consideration. If it’s a big chain store or if it’s an independent store like I might be more apt to let some of those aesthetics go.

P: And maybe depending on what they’re like we talked about grade earlier. So they’ve been checked and they’ve gotten pass on their check then I guess it’d be okay. But, I don’t know I would still prefer to go elsewhere. But yeah if there’s something there I just had to buy.

M: Going back to [Name of Participant], your idea about it being local versus a chain. How do others feel about that? Do you agree, do you disagree, you know what to you look for when you go to a local store versus like a chain store?

P: Usually I don’t go to local stores for this kind of stuff

P: Price.

P: Um I think for me local versus chain I am still looking for the same level of cleanliness. But like [Name of Participant] said the aesthetics okay a local mom and pop store it might look like that versus one of the larger chains then I want some bells and whistles because I know they are paying for those bells and whistles. So, other than that I’d say the same cleanliness. The prices of course will probably be different. But, cleanliness is comfort so I can’t.

M: Can you elaborate more on you know cleanliness versus like this aesthetic?

P: I mean I don’t want to see flies around the food whether it’s a local or a chain store. But aesthetics I mean if I have to pull the door open at a local store versus it having a very nice automatic door at a chain store. Those kinds of aesthetics I’m not as concerned about those versus the cleanliness and the grade from the health department. Those things are more important than the appearance, physical appearance.

P: I agree. I mean if we saw more of the store maybe it would be really clean, just dingy looking. Cause I can’t tell if the counter looks dingy or if it looks dirty like from that picture. I would want to see more of the store.

M: How about you [Name of Participant] what do you think?

P: What was the question?

M: Oh, we were just kind of talking about like a chain store versus a local store

P: Well, I don’t really shop at any local stores. Um, I mean there’s like, I mean yeah they’re not like a chain. Cause I feel like local stores are more specific like a butcher or a specific um like like
market rather than like a Wal-Mart type of thing. Um, so yeah, I mean I don’t know I mean I would buy the bone for my dog

P: I generally don’t go to like, so I prefer if I’m going to go to a local store it’s a local store that would be like a butcher or a deli. Um, if I’m going to somewhere where I want to get everything like cereal, and get my milk, and deli, and my raw meat I think that’s something that on a scale of larger commercial stores they probably, they probably do better because they wouldn’t be able to consistently do terrible. Like again the grading and things like that. Like Food Lion couldn’t get away with like 600 of their stores like being awful. But then again I live in a naive world. Um, but I think like for a local store its harder to without, it’s harder to get everything kind of meet all of those standards if they’re trying to do too many things.

M: So this idea of maybe um, eh, chain stores having more bells and whistles you know and you’d expect maybe a little more from them than a local store depending on you know what their, what their like selling and you know whether or not that would be kind of the same standards and stuff as a chain store. Am I hearing that correctly?

P: Yeah, at least on the food safety and that stuff. Like they probably have to get to a better amount. Like I almost don’t really care if my butcher is doing everything 100% correctly. Like if there’s a couple weird things, not that are grossly negligent, but I know there’s a lot of very small stipulations and I’m handling my food I don’t do 100% properly and I’m like eh its fine. But I haven’t had a terrible experience with food poisoning yet, so

M: Can you kind of keep going on the idea maybe elaborate a little more on you know what you mean by if I do something and you know

P: Like if this was a butcher and and I knew the butcher like I went there every week or every other week and bought all my stuff there. I mean the placement of these dog bones is odd, but I, it’s something I could by like Ray, you know if he’s the butcher guy, Ray why you got, why you got these raw bones up on the counter and he’s like aw that’s just from the ham that we just butchered and um I got them up there for this afternoon or something. I would almost be more okay with that and be like alright well I’m gonna get my pound of chicken from over there. Um, because I’m like it’s a guy like it’s something that I would do like I’m preparing something like I’ll put that there and get to it later. Maybe it’s been out for 25 minutes and it should only be out for 15 minutes, that kind of thing. Um, if I trust that like he’s not gonna then go take those put them back in the fridge then put them out tomorrow that kind of thing. If it’s like aw yeah I’m just trying to get rid of these now, but I’ll throw them away if not.

M: So kind of like this idea of knowing the person behind the counter and talking to them. Does anybody else kind of like talk to or interact with anyone in the store, does anyone else do that?

P: Mmmhmm
P: When we get deli meat we talk to people, so

P: Yeah

M: Um, would you purchase anything from this particular store on this day?

P: I would

P: No

P: Nah

P: I would just find it hard to believe that the entire store doesn’t look something like that

M: Can you kind of elaborate a little bit more on the look of it and how you determine that?

P: Um, it looks kind of old and unclean and nasty. I don’t have a dog so I don’t think it’s okay to put bones on the counter. Um, so yeah, I wouldn’t buy anything, in the whole store.

P: So if this is the first time I’m going to the store that’ll, this’ll probably change my opinion on the store so I won’t go there again or buy anything else. But if it’s a store where I usually go I would have a different opinion based on the quality of meat, less costly. I cook my meats thoroughly.

M: How do you define thoroughly?

P: I mean like boiling. To the maximum, like not burnt, but until its boiling. I cook mostly with pressure cookers so it cooks the meat thoroughly to well.

P: I don’t think I would have a problem purchasing from this store. But I also, I just, I have the assumption that it is a smaller store, a family owned store and I guess it’s something I think I would consider to be in a food desert where there’s not an option for a large chain grocery store nearby. But I would seek out a smaller store before I went to a chain because of that mentality. Just that wanting to support local smaller uh chain. So I’d probably shop there, just depending on price though, that’d be probably the next factor for me.

P: Yeah, I think depending on price and you know freshness of let’s say it’s a butcher then I’d probably buy something. You know I don’t think I would buy, I don’t know I don’t think I would eat lunch there, but I don’t know they might have lunch type food and those tables, but I’d probably buy, buy you know meat to go cook at home later.

M: So this idea of kind of maybe the smaller local store knowing, you know talking to who’s behind the counter, knowing whose there, you know trying to support that local economy,
and kind of the idea that you know you can still take it home and fix it however you want to as opposed to maybe eating it right there.
Okay, would you do anything in response to seeing this any why or why not?

P: I’d just walk out

P: I mean I’m the type unless I were making a purchase and I saw someone doing something that was unsanitary and the person tried to give me that I would just leave from that area, leave the store, unless there was something else I was going to buy. But, it isn’t even the same thing. Unless like [Name of Participant] said I know the butcher or whatever I say hey you gotta pick this up, get it out of the way. But otherwise.

P: Maybe if I saw them doing something unethical like drop the a piece of meat on the floor and pick it back up and put it on the shelf or something. Then I might have to say something. Otherwise probably not.

M: Okay, so some of you maybe would do something if something was obviously wrong or you know unethical or food safety wise.
Um, and would you or would seeing this at a particular store affect your impression of the store and why or why not?

P: I would think that it’s kind of neat that they had large fresh dog bones. I might get one you know for my dogs, but.

P: I, I agree with him. I think it’s neat that they have the bones. But outside of having a pet I wouldn’t bother, I wouldn’t bother a bit.

M: Anyone else agree, disagree? Alright, well are there any other thoughts or comments on this picture? Um, alright so well move onto the next one.

P: (all ew and ahing)

P: I’m out

M: Tell me what you see in this photo

P: Nasty

P: A bucket

P: On top of seafood?

P: No bones on me
P: It’s a filet

P: It is a filet

P: But that bucket is on top of the seafood

P: There’s like white stuff on it where the bucket is

P: I think that’s a reflection

P: Reflection of the light yeah

P: But on the black part you can see there’s some sort of water

P: Yeah, that’s true

P: Yeah

P: Or drops

P: If the bucket had like cleaning solution in it I would be okay, but I mean if it was

P: It’s possible that they could be in the process of cleaning, if I see them cleaning then

P: Yeah, but there’s seafood in the glass below it

P: But if the glass is like cleaned it has to be on the outside of the glass at some point, so if that’s, if its sealed and there’s no way that can get inside it. But I don’t think that’s something they should be doing during customer hours because it scares us. If I don’t know that it can’t get in there that’s gonna scare me. But if they know there’s no way this um you know disinfectant or cleaning solution can get inside there were just wiping it down. But I still don’t think it’s okay to have the bucket on top touching a food surface because they might hand you something that’s gonna touch that surface and then you’re gonna take it home, even though it wrapped.

P: I mean maybe if they move the bucket and clean under the bucket after?

P: I don’t know I think it would depend on their cleaning process

P: Yeah because I don’t know what’s going on in that bucket

P: They may have put it on the ground, pick it back up
P: Now if the bucket has dirty paper towels in it and they weren’t cleaning, that would be an issue, so

P: Or if the water in it is really dirty

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: It, It’s just wrong

M: So this idea of there’s like a bucket you know with maybe some cleaning stuff in it um on top of a counter where there’s some reflection or something on there um and there’s this idea of it possibly getting into the cabinet or you know someone handing something across the counter and whether or not its wrapped and that getting contaminated

P: And you know the truth of the matter is we don’t actually know what’s in that bucket. It’s supposed to be sanitizing solution only according to the bucket

P: According to, yeah

P: I think my concern is if you’re doing something that sloppy then I don’t know what you did to that meat before you wrapped it so yeah, I might

P: Or what you did to that, inside that casing before you put the meat in there

P: Yeah, so I would probably, no not probably, I would say something because you know that’s not gonna work

P: Just gonna leave the bucket

P: I guess why I’m okay with it is cause like if I’m spraying something with Lysol I’ll sit the Lysol on the counter you know even though you know I probably should set it on the floor or something and then like grab it again to spray the counter, but, so I mean I don’t know

P: That goes back to what [Name of Participant] was saying earlier about things that he does that may not necessarily be the proper way to do it

P: I mean so if it looks like it’s a designated this is a bucket used for cleaning and like we keep it in a clean location because it looks like the rest of it is pretty clean so I guess that’s why I would be more lenient

P: Although my thoughts are that you know that’s a big bucket and that’s a pretty high counter so it can’t have very much of anything in there
P: To be lift

P: Yeah nobody wants to lift a big heavy bucket five feet up in the air, especially if you’re working at a deli for $7 an hour, um, so I figured this place was already closed and they’re just cleaning up for the day, so that’s kind of my thoughts

P: But that worries you because if you’re closed shouldn’t they take that off the ice and stick that seafood in the freezer

P: Oh, I didn’t see that, yeah

P: The whole thing could be a freezer is what I’m thinking

P: Maybe the back is closed and it’s just all used as a freezer or something

P: Yeah, but

P: They could just cover it overnight, like they could put saran wrap over it cause there’s ice in there and it stays cold there’s no reason for them to remove it and go package it

P: Aren’t they supposed to put fresh ice in everyday?

P: I think, yeah, I think at night they would cover it with ice. I’ve seen some um seafood places where it’s all covered with ice and it looks like there’s still a lot of stuff exposed. So, I’d be assuming it is during business hours.

P: I think I’m okay with it. I think it was just bad timing. I think just somebody. I don’t think that bucket is supposed to be there all the time. I think somebody just sat it down for whatever reason, but I don’t think it’s normally like that.

P: I still worry about that splatter stuff on the black part. Because as much as you try to seal things over time sealants do break and that can drip into that inside. So yeah I do worry about the splatter and in all honestly if the health inspector happened to walk past there...

P: Mmmhmm

P: ...They’re in trouble for that

M: So it sounds like I’m hearing sort of this idea of were not sure what’s in the bucket, we’re not sure how much is in the bucket um or what it is. And this idea of you know is it during business hours, is it after it’s closed, um, who’s going to be seeing this. Is it um you know maybe if they’re doing something that you know, if it isn’t right then is there other things
they’re doing that could be wrong you know that could cause concern. Um, any other thoughts on that?

P: You know I can just guarantee that anytime it is wrong to have a bucket on a food surface. Like that’s against whatever health food safety something or other. So

P: It’s just so weird that it’s a ... bucket. It’s just weird that you can lift it up and ... Like even if you’re cleaning you have it in your hand, you have it on the ground and then .... beverage off the surface. But it’s just weird that it’s a ... bucket.

P: I mean bucket aside, the background looks pretty clean, so

P: Actually the bucket says not for food surface

P: Food Storage

P: Oh, food storage okay

P: Not for food storage

P: I can’t read

P: Either way

M: So, um, do you, would you consider the food shown in this, um, in this photo to be safe or unsafe in terms of food safety?

P: I think the food is safe for me. But it’s the background because I use spray cans to clean when the food is present if it’s during business hours instead of getting a used bucket all where food is being passed. I think the food is pretty okay, because the rest of the place is clean

P: Yeah, it’s probably alright. I mean I know I cook the heck out of all my seafood. I make sure it’s done, um, so it probably would be alright because you would cook it. Um, but, it’s not good practice.

M: What about you [Name of Participant]? You’re making a face.

P: Told ya I’m a visual person. So, I anything that throws off throws me off is it’s a turn off for me

P: So a big bright orange bucket on a counter turns you off?

P: Wait what bucket?
P: And and I look at the splash

P: Little splash, yeah, yeah, yeah

P: Little splash

P: It could be meat juice who knows

P: Yeah, fish juice

P: Who knows

P: See and I got an issue with seafood. I’m really funny about my seafood anyways. So

P: So that leads me to believe how fresh it is. There’s a smell in there.

P: Oh see now you’ll know how fresh it is by the time before you even get into

P: Yeah

P: If smell seafood when I hit the front door, I’m out

P: Mmmhmm

P: But yeah that’s

P: It’s a splash, it’s a big splash

P: And it looks like a puddle behind the bucket

P: I think that’s just a glare

P: I hope it’s a glare

P: Yeah I think it’s a glare

P: It’s a glare

**M: So are most people feeling safe, unsafe, not sure?**

P: I would consider it safe

P: I would too, I’d probably buy the fish there, but
P: It’s

P: I mean if it smells good any everything and I’m gonna cook it so

P: And as [Name of Participant] pointed out, the background looks like a very clean establishment. Like they have the right kind of food surfaces and um I, it just looks like a clean place so it may have just been bad timing.

M: So you know it sounds like most of you would consider it probably safe, um, cause the whole rest of the place seems pretty clean and um ...
Um, would you um buy anything in the store department? And why or why not?

P: I mean if the rest of the store looks that clean I’m willing to give them the benefit of the doubt that this was just some person that didn’t know the proper procedures or something, so

M: People nodding yes. Okay, um how about in this particular store?

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: It’s probably a nice place especially if they offer to fry your stuff for free

P: And everything looks new

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: Shiny

P: Yeah

M: [Name of Participant] can you elaborate a little bit more on that?

P: What new and shiny?

M: Yeah
P: I mean you can all, everything has reflective surfaces, which means it’s not an old store or...

P: There’s no dirt

P: ...Yeah no dirt surfaces and for me I would probably move onto the next spot. That bucket is just turns me off visually, but everything else is you know clean and except that bucket with the juice. Cause I’m not sure if that’s water or if that’s fish juice just what is it. No to ice

M: So this idea of were not sure what’s exactly on the counter...

P: ... right

M: ... and that all the fact that the bucket just seems out of the ordinary

P: Yeah and you know you just kinda just gonna leave it sitting there

M: Okay. Would anyone do anything in response to seeing this photo?

P: Tell them to move the bucket

P: I mean if it was in normal business hours I would probably tell them to move the bucket. Cause I would be afraid, like depending what’s in it, I’d be afraid it’d fall on a kid walking by or something, so

M: Anyone else do anything in response to this photo?

P: Just tell the person behind the counter to just move the bucket off of the counter.

P: I wouldn’t say anything I would think, but I probably wouldn’t say anything. Probably being passive aggressive and non-confrontational

P: Yeah I would probably just think that’s odd and keep on going where I was going.

M: So it sounds like some people would say something some would just kind of move along. Okay. Would seeing this at particular store would this affect your impression of the store and why or why not?

P: It wouldn’t really change it

P: Maybe just the area

M: How so?
P: I would just think somebody just really don’t care back here

P: It may not be that they don’t care it just the common sense didn’t click that that bucket was on the ground, you’re putting food on the counter, you put the dirty bucket on the counter. So it’s not that they don’t care; they just don’t think the whole process through.

P: You gotta just try to stay positive and think at least they clean. Hopefully is a sign that they clean.

P: I find that so funny

P: And that counter looks like other shoppers would be able to touch the counter. So I feel that the counter would be dirty anyway. I would just automatically assume whether they clean or not, it’s a dirty counter, so

M: So it sounds like it wouldn’t really affect your impression too much. But maybe at least they’re cleaning or maybe they don’t care but maybe you know someone just didn’t realize what they were doing. Any other thoughts or comments on this photo?

P: I don’t think this would affect my opinion of the store. I would still go there.

M: Okay, alright. Well let’s go ahead and move onto the next one.

P: Ohh

P: Heck no

P: Nope

P: That’s a done deal for me

M: So tell me what you see in this picture?

P: A huge roach whether it’s dead or alive

P: It’s dead

P: Meaning that their eggs that are somewhere there

P: Nope

P: Yeah, there’s something living in there

P: If you’re that big, you’ve been there for a while and you’ve laid some eggs somewhere
P: In other words it’s been nesting
P: And this looks like it might be the kitchen too. It looks like there might be some sort of appliance in the background...

P: Mmmhmm

P: ...That the broom is sitting on

P: Yeah. And the dust pan

P: It’s not alright

P: The broom looks very old

P: Yeah

P: Super old

P: Yeah it looks like an older store

P: Yeah

P: Where maintenance and care has kind of been neglected for a while

P: Yeah it looks like maybe somebody needs to do some inspections around like the outside of the building to make sure things are sealed, that there aren’t cracks under doors. Cause if that cockroach is that big it had to get in somewhere. But they’re so sneaky. Like they amaze me. I did not grow up with them and I’ve been here for like a year and a half and I’m just like what is that thing. Cause I’m not used to seeing them and for me it doesn’t really, I’m like yeah they’re annoying pests. I don’t know if it’s the store’s fault that they’re there. Cause I feel like even as clean as you can get they’re still gonna be around. So I would have to look at the rest of the store in order to see that. Like that could be again a bad moment.

P: Yeah I agree. I mean I’ve seen some in my house and like I know we keep it clean. But you know I mean there’s not much you can do

P: I think I read one time um like the larger the roach is the less likely it’s to have a bunch of friends or something. So..

P: (everyone laughs)
P: ... I feel like if it is a singular roach it’s, it might like a one time, like if it’s a large one and it’s a one-time occurrence. But if you see a smaller one it could mean there’s a bunch of other ones if that makes sense. Not that that excuses the fact that there’s a roach, but um yeah

M: So this idea of there’s a roach in the kitchen, or sorry, in the grocery store, and um a kind of old broom and maybe an old appliance back there. Um sounds like it could be kind of old

P: The grout and the tile is dirty. It, that needs to be cleaned.

M: Not sure if there are more bugs you know that may or may not concern some of you. You know maybe not having seen some in your home would make it more okay, but not so sure. Okay.

P: I don’t know if it’s alive because it’s laying in a weird position

P: And props to the photographer who managed to capture the the actual roach

P: I think it’s dead

P: I think it kinda looks like one of those you know toy plastic roaches that you would put on someone’s pillow or something like that. That’s what it reminds me of, but

P: I do like the set-up of the floor it looks like. I mean just the way the floor is they could probably take a hose and spray everything down with it, which that would be a good cleaning method, so

P: Which would be a good reason why the grout shouldn’t be dirty so that should tell you that they’re not doing that

P: This picture has a lot of problems

P: I think it’s just old and unkept

P: The molding is coming loose’

P: Mmhmm

P: All on the door frame

P: All the dirt where the tile meets the wall or whatever that is, dry wall or whatever it’s kind of peeling. You can see yellowing behind the probably fridge thing back there.

P: The broom looks like it’s painted. Like it was a wooden broom that was painted and now paint is flaking off of it
P: (laughs) It does

P: Yeah it does

P: It’s just not a particularly sanitary picture. So assuming this a public place where food is being served, which I think is one of the assumptions we are working on, um, it’s not necessary like their fault, like it’s hard to keep up with all of that, but you know, we have to, I have certain standards for. Like if my kitchen looked that this it’s like well that’s one thing it’s only my kitchen, but when it’s food for many many people you’d be like yeah food safety standard service. It just seems like not very well kept to where food, where a food storage place should be better kept than this.

P: It looks to me like a fast food restaurant.

P: Right, a restaurant

P: A fast food restaurant, like a Wendy’s like and old Wendy’s

P: The back room

P: Maybe an Arby’s

P: I mean if the roach was dead I would think more positively cause that means they’re doing something to try and like poison them or something, so they’re trying to fix it, but um

P: What is the roach died because of the broom?

P: Cause its right near the broom

P: Right

P: Active deterrence

P: But like [Name of Participant] said, I’d have to look at the rest of the store to see like if the rest of it looks like clean. I can understand if it’s a little bit run down like you can’t repair everything if it’s a mom and pop store, but if they keep it clean then.

M: Okay, so this idea of it being older looking. Whether or not how the rest of the store looks. Whether or not it’s clean versus just old

P: And where exactly in the store this is. If it’s just like a back room

P: Yeah
P: A janitor’s closet or something like that yeah

P: Something that I just thought about. I was like man I feel like I’ve seen that tile somewhere and I just thought about all the places that I’ve worked and like I’ve spent some time for a couple years working for a Starbucks. And I’m like well if that were in a Starbucks I’d understand. There’s a ton of dish washing liquid, there’s a lot of stuff that may not be like scrubbed down or washed with a towel. But I’m not worried about someone making me a cup of coffee and if there’s a roach in it. Like I’m just not as concerned if that were a butcher department. And I don’t know why because like still nobody’s going to be setting stuff on the ground and if anything they’re going to be more careful in a butcher department. But I think my opinion would change based on what I would be getting from that department of the store.

M: Can you elaborate more on what you mean by

P: Yeah I mean if they’re providing me a finished product that’s being cooked there like if they were to make me a latte and that’s what the back room looks like I wouldn’t be as concerned, but if its raw food that it may have come into contact with that and wasn’t cooked right away and has some time to sit before I cook it, I think I would be more concerned.

P: Raw, cooked, packaged, plastic, anything I wouldn’t. Because those critters crawl on surfaces and no.

P: Yeah, I’d just freak out

P: Yeah, they can go inside of things like cups

M: Would anyone else do anything in response to seeing this?

P: Hit it with a broom

P: I might try to squish it

P: I would tell a manager like there’s a dead roach back there

P: I would just leave

P: Yeah

P: Send them a sticky note

P: They would know cause I would scream. I scream when I see a bug so they would hear something. Lady in the back screaming. Get it, get it, get it, get it, get it, get it.
P: I really don’t think this person would be able to take a picture if it wasn’t dead. Plus the angle makes me think it’s dead.

P: I agree, I think it is dead cause roaches you turn on light they scatter.

P: Yeah they don’t just stay there.

P: This ones just chillin like yo I’m coming for you.

P: Which means you have a dead roach living in your, just sitting there you didn’t pick it up.

P: They didn’t clean it.

P: That’s what I said. I’m very impressed with that photo. Like why is that broom not being actively used to sweep up the dead roach.

P: Hold on, wait, let’s take a picture.

P: Yeah.

M: [Name of Participant] what about you?

P: I mean the size of the roach doesn’t mean that it’s the only one there. It’s been there for a long time, so I would be alarmed. If I see that in a kitchen it should probably be, but that’s there in the kitchen I mean I probably wouldn’t buy anything from there.

M: So this idea that you know there could be more.

P: There definitely is more. They are hiding.

P: Yeah there’s definitely more. Against the wall hiding behind the refrigerator, something.

M: So not sure if it’s the only one.

P: Because if they aren’t cleaning stuff this isn’t the only one.

P: I agree with that.

P: See I’m more with [Name of Participant] because you know at my apartment whenever it rains a ton of them just kind of swarm the apartment and we spray you know we have it sprayed every couple of months. So, it should be alright, but there’s nothing we can do but just kill them when they come in.
P: But the thing about apartments is it’s not necessarily your apartment. It could be the neighbors, it could be downstairs, above you, so you’re gonna always end up with those. But a department, a grocery store that’s a standalone, you have a roach in there you know. One, if you only see one and the whole store is okay, maybe it isn’t a frequent occurrence, maybe it came through a door. But one in the bathroom, one in the kitchen, you know one in the cereal aisle now that’s bad

P: One of that size, it’s got some friends living with it

P: And some babies and grandchildren

P: If it’s big it might actually be a frequent occurrence, but either way I wouldn’t go back there because there’s a roach

P: Yeah

M: So one question I want to propose is what, what is it about a bug that your concerned about like specifically

P: It’s a bug

P: It’s disgusting

P: It’s a roach

P: Yeah, that’s it

P: I mean I was brought up that roaches equals nasty

P: Yeah

P: And I mean I grew up in the country and yes in the country you do have them you know on the outside. But you know just like her roaches do the equal, they equal, its nasty. They bring germs, you just don’t want them. And when you see one you kill it immediately because it’s hard to get rid of roaches once they infest everything.

P: And they just didn’t clean it

M: So this idea of a roach being associated with it being gross and nasty and you know maybe its not, its just been up there, it’s not been cleaned up

P: I think it’s the idea of they’re so hard to get rid of that like for roaches in particular for me, when I see one in a place its permanently tainted like man that place is never gonna be ever be totally free of roaches. Like in the apartment, the townhouse I live in, the first time when I saw
a roach, I was like damn, this is a roach place. We, we don’t see them but maybe one a year, which is, which is fine for all considerations. But it’s still like tainted permanently in a slight way. So this would be like there’s no way they’re gonna totally be done with roaches in this restaurant or grocery store or whatever. So I guess roaches for me are like different.

P: And I guess I just look at it as they’re just a part of life. I mean they’re gonna happen so

P: If it were an ant or a spider I would say it’s part of life, its gonna happen. But those nasty buzzards, nah

M: So it sounds like [Name of Participant] it would affect your impression of the store. Or would it affect anybody’s impression of the store?

P: Absolutely

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: I would probably go back to buying things there after a few months. Like again because it’s a way of life. But like it would definitely like be in the back of my mind like man they kind of have roaches. And like even if I did purchase something I would kind of be like eh its only cause like the convenience has outweighed that little warning in the back of my head

P: So then when you gonna open your box of cereal and one pops out of there are you gonna go back again?

P: That’s an entirely different story, kind of like they’re on probation kind of thing. It’s like two strikes and then anything else in the store is like mmm like if I see an employee doing something weird or if I see another bug then I’d be like okay never coming here again.

P: Yeah, I guess that’s how I look at it. Like if this is a singular event then I’d probably be find. But if I saw other things than I wouldn’t come back again

P: And I’d definitely be more aware of like looking for it the next time I was there

P: Right, right

P: Like after a couple months I got the nerve to go back to whatever department this is I’d be like check

P: But you live in Raleigh, it’s not the only grocery store in town. So why would you go back here knowing it’s disgusting if you could go anywhere else?
P: Because

P: Okay, prime example, where I went to school. I went to school down east. The city is in

P: Did you go to ECU?

P: Yes. So the closest store, and that was eons ago. But the closest grocery store if you didn’t have a car was walking distance. It was the most disgusting grocery store ever. But, you could walk to it. Otherwise you had to catch a cab or find your ride out to the city to the grocery store. So you kind of was like okay I’m gonna make a city run to get x, y, and z. But I’m out of cereal, damn I got to go to that store. And you kind of went in like I don’t want to be here.

P: Yeah

P: Kind of you know as soon as I get outside let me pop the box and make sure it ain’t stale so I won’t have to walk back kind of thing

P: Yeah it depends where you live

P: Yeah so

M: Okay, so this idea of that you know this might be like an isolated incident or you know a lot of you know your frequency, your impression, the frequency of shopping there and your impression would be linked too. Cause other things you might see like you see something else, but all that aside you know the whole idea of the store being close or convenient is still you know really important and it may or may not trump this idea of you know seeing something like this

P: And then also like [Name of Participant] mentioned depending on what you buy there

P: Again college student on a budget you don’t think about that

P: And then again that was 20 years younger college student on a budget over budget. 20 plus years younger

M: Okay, um so kind of going back to this original idea, we sort of danced around it. But would you consider this situation safe or unsafe in terms of food safety and why or why not?

P: Definitely not safe

P: It’s still

P: If it’s a single incident it’s probably fine, but if not it means they’re not cleaning the place properly
M: So most of you are saying unsafe?

P: Yeah, depending on if it’s isolated or not

P: Yeah

P: Yeah, I mean it’s a strike against them but

P: But how are you gonna know if it is?

P: Right

P: You’re not there all the time

P: Well it depends on where it is. If it’s Western Bojangles I know

P: Did you say Western?

P: Yeah

P: Yeah

P: I mean and if the picture scanned up and if the counters were like all dirty and cluttered, I mean that would the last for me

P: And if you show them right here they would of course be like oh no I’ve never seen this roach here before. Where did this come from? But I mean

P: But if you scanned up and the counters were spotless and everything was stainless steel and wiped down and you saw cleaning products then I mean I would be more lenient like they try, so

P: Even with the dirty dust pan on the refrigerator, dishwasher, whatever it is

P: I mean it also depends on like if this is the bathroom area then like yeah sure, but I wouldn’t want that broom going into the, like I’d want it to stay in the bathroom rather than going to the

P: But they leads me to believe they should have brooms somewhere else in the building too

P: Yeah
P: I mean it looks like it might have something growing on it

M: So this idea of you know most people say unsafe you know but it also kind of depends where where is this in the store. Like you know which broom they use. Okay any other thoughts or comments on this um picture? Along those lines I guess [Name of Participant] sort of already answered this, but does this affect your impression of the store?

P: Yes

M: Okay well are there any other thoughts or comments on this photo? Would you buy anything else in the store?

P: No

P: Nope

P: It has to be a freak blizzard and I can’t drive anywhere and I need some milk right away

P: I’d definitely still buy packaged goods

P: Yeah, can or soup, sure, why not

M: Any other thoughts or comments on this photo?

P: Ew

P: Nasty

M: Alright, well that was our last photo, um I have like one more question for all of you before we wrap up. Um, if you could come up with a definition for food safety what would it be and why. Or not why. Sorry I’m just used to saying that. And everybody has to answer.

P: Like temperature, or separation, I don’t know the specifics I’ve never worked in food service. But it would be a scientific definition, not just it looks safe.

P: I’d say something like a set of practices that ensure with all reasonable doubt, effort to keep um safe or sanitary all foods to be sold to the public.

P: I would think more like is it going to make me sick.

P: That’s what I would think of mostly
P: For me the practices, same as [Name of Participant] said, the practices of storing and handling of foods for the groceries and cleaning is part of it

P: Yeah, I guess I would look at the overall safety practices rather than like an isolated incident where I see a bucket or something. I mean yeah so the practices to ensure that the food stays safe and doesn’t get contaminated

P: Yeah I’d say practices and protocols that prevent breaches of food safety. Because there’s no way that were going to be able to test every piece of food to make sure there’s not pathogens for each demographic. Like what’s safe for a two-year-old may be more safety than you need for a ten year old. So yeah to the best of our abilities making it safe for you know 95% of the population, 99 I guess if you’re immunocompromised or elderly or nursing, young children. I’d say preventative control more than anything.

P: Yeah I think you know procedures, practices, um to prevent people from getting sick or you know to keep them from getting unwell from you know consuming or being around food

P: I agree. Procedures and practices that just take into consideration the type of things that you’re trying to keep safe. So if you’re a kosher grocery store you know you’re going to have to do things differently than a regular chain grocery store. If it’s a place that you’re worried about people that are allergic to different things you’re going to separate things differently there.

P: I agree. Practices, procedures, but not just with the actual storage of the food, but with the employees as well as in making sure you wear gloves, washing your hands, covering hair, um keeping food at set temperatures, making sure, regulating the temperatures and making sure someone monitors food storage and things of that nature.

P: Um I agree with what everyone said I would just add that I would like to included standardized. So, its standard on a federal level, but then on a state level as well that its, how its packaged, the people that are handling it, how its shipped, how its stored, all of that should be standardized. So, I couldn’t say well I don’t have to do this because I’m in this area, so, within this particular area of the country.

P: To add to that like the standardized, I really like the grades that North Carolina does. I’ve been to other states and they don’t do that, which really annoys me. So I really like North Carolina’s method of grading the store.

M: So it sounds like most of you kind of see food safety as having standards and regulations that you know tell you know employees and stores how to make safe, sanitary food that’s not going to make people sick or make people ill. Okay, awesome are there any other questions, thoughts, or comments, before I have M2 wrap up for us?
P: I really wanted to ask about sell by date, use by date, and the difference. What do you think about that? Cause I am unclear with because we have been here for two years so

M: Okay, well actually I’m going to address that after were done. So part of a focus group is you’re not supposed to provide information, so when were done I’m going to address that to everybody. But I’m going to go ahead and turn it over to M2 and I’ll let let kind of summarize all that you’ve talked about.

M2: Alright, so, it seems like you guys shop a variety of times a week from 1 time a week to 4 times a week. And you buy a variety of things from the grocery store mostly produce, milk, eggs, cereal, snacks, and different kinds of meat. Um, you shop at Food Lion, Kroger, Harris Teeter, Aldi and Wal-Mart. And um the things that are important to you are um convenience and cost and availability of different foods. Um other factors that are important to you when shopping are prices, customer service, the hours that they’re open and the quality and freshness of the food. You cook for yourself from 1 time a week to 7 times a week and you cook for others from 1 time a month to 7 times a week, it kind of depends on family size and who you’re cooking for. Um, and you cook for roommates, friends, family, um people from different clubs, and sometimes pregnant people if you’re doing like food chain or something like that. Um, from the first picture you guys saw a salad bar that may or may not have a sneeze guard with maybe cottage cheese and fruit and potentially rice, or grits, or tapioca, not quite sure. Um, some of you think it’s safe, some think unsafe because you don’t know how long the food has been out for and you’re a little bit worried about the utensils. Um, you said it’s more of a quality issue potentially than a safety issue. Um, and that people could be touching it and you’re worried about the temperature and and that it’s potentially open and exposed. Um, some may buy this food, most of you would not. You said that it doesn’t look appealing and it’s most cost friendly to buy like the melon yourself and cut it up. Um, many of you would still buy from the department depending on what it looks like and if it’s clean. Um, you said that you would most likely buy from the store, it depends on the sanitation. Um, and you would be more likely to buy packaged goods than fresh foods that were potentially not clean. Um, you said you wouldn’t do anything from seeing this picture and it wouldn’t really affect your impression of the store. It would affect your impression of the store, if it wasn’t clean and cottage cheese was on the edge or if like the cantaloupe was in the honeydew or something like that. For the second picture you saw bones for dogs that were on a counter and there was stuff underneath in a case and this was most likely in a deli. The bones were unwrapped and open and may be subject to cross contamination and the background counter looks a little but old and dingy. Um, some of you think this is safe for dogs and some think unsafe. Um, some of you would buy the cans below and maybe wipe it off and some wouldn’t buy anything in the picture. Um, and then you mentioned that bones near the raw food could create cross contamination. Um, many of you said that you would not buy from this department at all. Um, some may buy packaged things from the department instead of just the raw open things. Um, and you said you’d be more likely to buy from the store if it were a local store rather than like a national chain. Um, some would not buy from the store at all from seeing the bones. Um, you said it looks old and unclean so most likely the rest of the store looks like this as well. Um, like I said before you would buy more local and it also
depends on the price and the freshness of the rest of the food. Um, and you’d be more likely to buy, some of you said you’d be more likely to buy raw foods that you can cook later rather than ready to eat foods. Um, most of you would not do anything about thus. Um, if you saw something else like someone dropping meat on the floor then you would probably say something. Um, and your impression, some of you think it’s interesting. Um, some of you think it’s kind of weird. For the third picture, you saw a bucket with cleaning solution or something else, not totally sure on top of the counter with seafood beneath in a case. Um, and you the cleaning solution may potentially be able to get into the cabinet or there may be some splashing. Um, most of you think it’s relatively safe because the background looks pretty clean and um it looks like they’re actively cleaning in the photo. Um, you would most likely cook the food anyways because you like to cook your seafood. Some of you think it’s unsafe because the splash is there and you don’t know what’s in the bucket and you’re not quite sure if the seals are totally sealed. Um, you said you would buy from the department depending on how it looked. Um, if you did buy it you would cook it anyways. Um, and the store looks pretty new and clean in the background. Um, some of you would tell an employee to move the bucket. Some of you wouldn’t say anything. Overall it doesn’t really affect your impression of the area- at least they are cleaning. For the fourth photo you see a roach in a grocery store with an old looking broom and some kind of appliance. The tile is tile is dirty and the grout is dirty. Um, and you may they’re may not be more bugs. Um, and you’re not sure if the roach is dead or alive. Um, you said um most say this is not safe, but if this was a singular event and the rest of the store looked clean it could be more safe. Um, it would affect your impression overall, but if it were a singular incidence it would be pretty okay and you may go back depending on the closeness of the store and what you were buying. And if you were to buy things from the store or the department they’d probably be packaged goods rather than raw foods. Oh and then you said that you may tell someone, some of you would kill it, some of you would scream so people would hear you. Um, and some of you wouldn’t buy from the store. And then for what is food safety we talked about temperature, separation, standards and regulations that tell employees and stores how to make safe food and that won’t make people sick.

M: Okay, does that sound like pretty much what we talked about?

P: Mmhmm

M: Okay, awesome. If someone wouldn’t mind passing me that recorder and I will turn it off and we can stop that.