



## Tracking Public Perceptions of MAHA

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### Introduction

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission, established via Executive Order in February of this year, has been tasked to advise President Donald Trump on how to best address childhood chronic disease ([EO 14212, 2025](#)). The Commission’s initial report, released in May 2025, highlighted four “potential drivers behind the rise in childhood chronic disease that present the clearest opportunities for progress” ([MAHA Report, 2025](#)). These were: poor diet, aggregation of environmental chemicals, lack of physical activity and chronic stress, and overmedicalization. The report was critical of some aspects of the food system, including the use of some food additives and pesticides. The Committee was also instructed to create a strategic plan, informed by the initial report, for the president. A draft of the plan, leaked earlier this month, was called “industry friendly” ([Shin, 2025](#)) and met with critique and praise ([Crawford, 2025](#); [Henderson, 2025](#); [Bottemiller Evich, 2025](#)). The final draft is forthcoming.

In this post, we utilize results from the last two waves of the Gardner Food and Agricultural Policy Survey (GFAPS), conducted in May 2025 and August 2025, to evaluate how public awareness and support for MAHA has shifted over the last three months. In May, we reported strong support across political parties (*farmdoc daily*, [May 30, 2025](#); [June 4, 2025](#)). Now, while support is still high overall, perceptions of MAHA have become more negative, in particular amongst Democrats. Additionally, we discuss which of the four drivers consumers believe should be most prioritized.

### Methods

In this post we review insights from the Gardner Food and Agricultural Policy Survey (GFAPS), using results from both May 2025 (wave 13) and August 2025 (wave 14). Each wave, about 1,000 U.S.

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consumers are recruited via Qualtrics online using quotas to match the U.S. population in terms of gender, annual household income, age, and region.

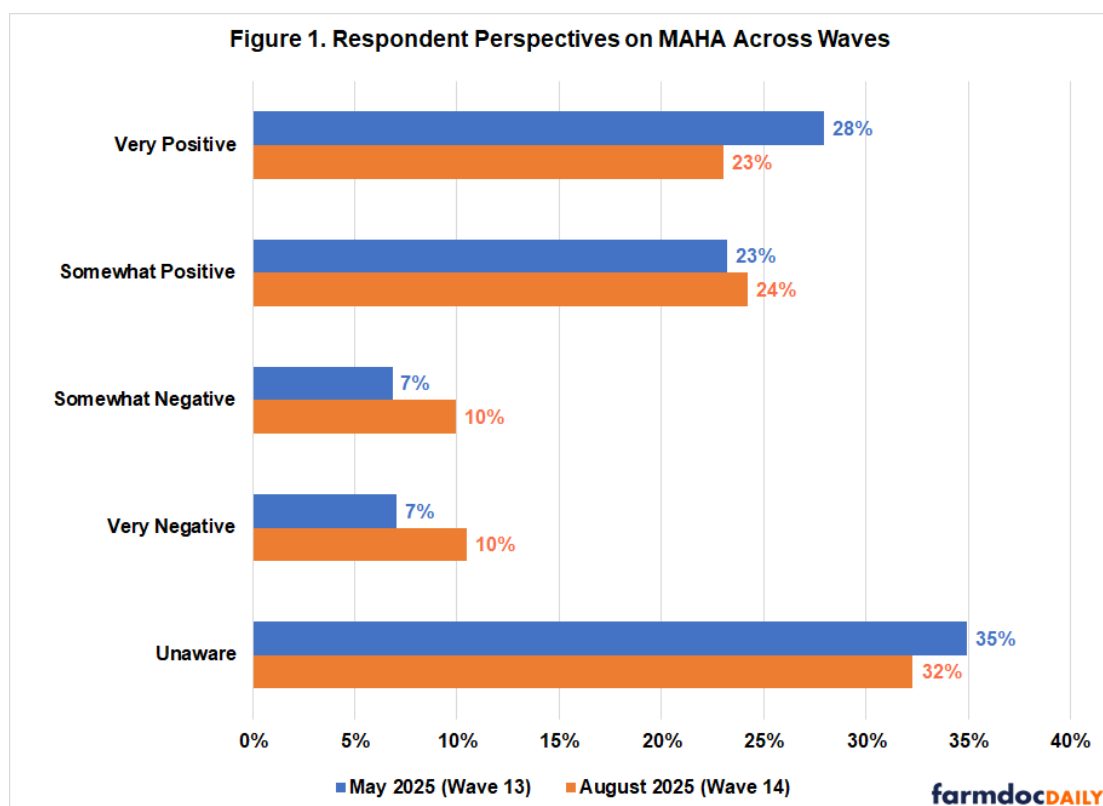
In both waves, to measure MAHA awareness, we asked respondents, "Prior to this survey, had you heard of the "Make America Healthy Again" campaign?" Respondents could answer yes or no. Those who were aware of MAHA prior to the survey were then asked about their perspective on MAHA. Specifically, they were asked, "How would you describe your view on the "Make America Healthy Again" campaign?" Respondents could answer very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative. Additionally, respondents who were aware of MAHA were also asked to what extent the campaign reflected their values. Specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "The "Make America Healthy Again" campaign reflects my values about food." The question was also asked for their values about medicine and their values about agriculture. The order of the three values questions was randomized to prevent ordering effects. For each, respondents could answer strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. For brevity, we combine strongly and somewhat agree into a combined agree category and strongly and somewhat disagree into a combined disagree category in the discussion below.

In wave 14, all respondents were also asked about their priorities for the MAHA Commission. Specifically, respondents were told that the recent Make America Healthy Again Commission's report highlights four potential drivers behind the rise in childhood chronic disease that present opportunities for progress and that the Commission is expected to propose policy changes related to these drivers. Then, respondents were asked in their opinion, which were most important to address. The four drivers listed from the report were: poor diet, aggregation of environmental chemicals, lack of physical activity and chronic stress, and overmedicalization. Respondents were asked to rank the drivers on a scale from 1=most important to address to 4=least important to address. The order of the drivers was randomized to prevent ordering effects.

## Results

Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents who were unaware of MAHA prior to the survey in both May and August and, amongst those who were aware of MAHA, those who viewed MAHA as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative in each wave. We find that awareness of MAHA increased slightly over the last three months. In August, 68% of respondents had heard of MAHA prior to the survey, up from 65% in May, and perspectives became somewhat more negative.

Perspectives on MAHA differed across politics. For those who were aware of MAHA prior to the survey, Table 1 shows the proportion of Republican, Democratic, and Independent/Other respondents who viewed MAHA as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, and very negative. Democratic respondents saw the largest shift, with a 16-point decline for those who viewed MAHA as very positive, a 9-point increase for those who viewed MAHA as somewhat negative, and a 6-point increase for those who viewed MAHA as very negative. Independent/Other respondents became slightly more negative (6-point increase in very negative), and Republicans respondents' perspectives were relatively stable.



**Table 1. Respondents' Perspectives on MAHA Across Waves and Politics**

	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
<b>Republican Respondents</b>				
Wave 13 (May 2025)	60%	34%	4%	2%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	58%	33%	7%	2%
<b>Democratic Respondents</b>				
Wave 13 (May 2025)	33%	33%	12%	23%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	17%	33%	21%	29%
<b>Independent/Other Respondents</b>				
Wave 13 (May 2025)	29%	42%	19%	10%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	25%	43%	17%	15%

*Note:* Responses above do not include respondents who were unaware of MAHA prior to the survey. Sums may not equal to 1 due to rounding.

In addition to perceptions of MAHA overall, respondents who were aware of MAHA prior to the survey answered questions about whether the MAHA campaign reflected their values about food, medicines, and agriculture. Results across waves and politics are listed in Table 2. Here, too, we find significant drops in support from Democratic respondents. In particular, we see a 21-point drop in Democrats' agreement with

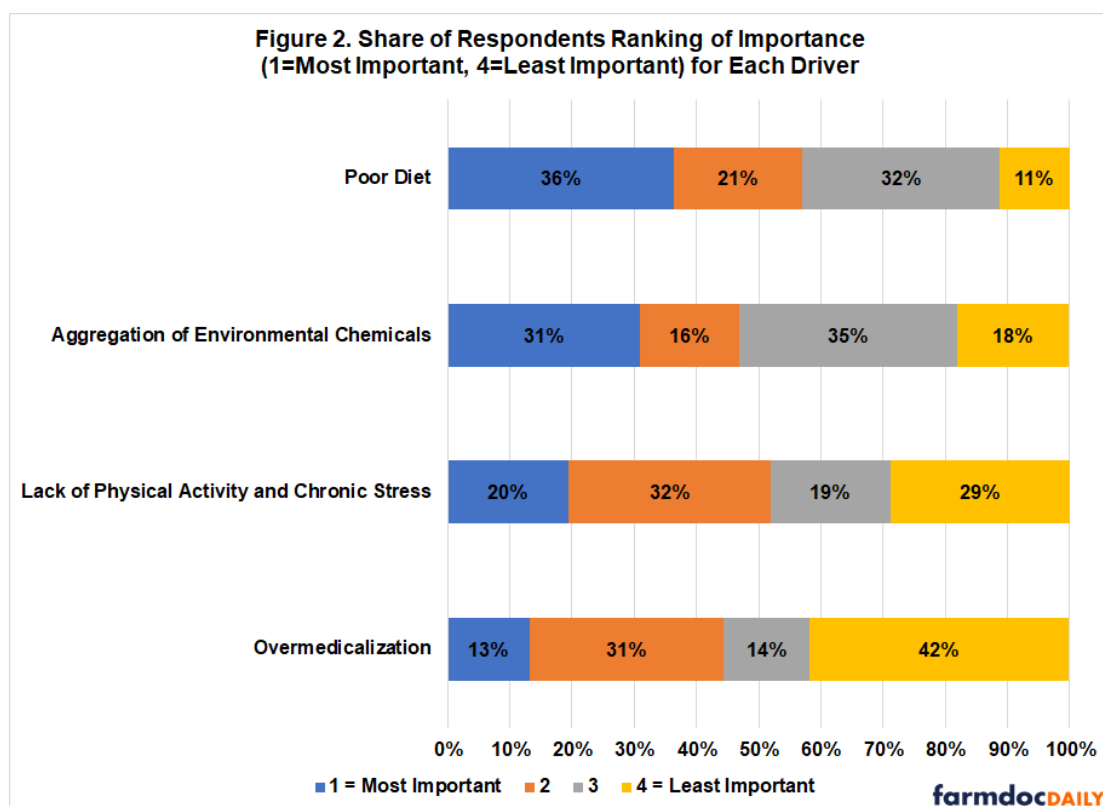
the idea that MAHA reflects their values about medicines, from 60% in May to 39% in August. Agreement also dropped considerably for both agriculture (-16 points) and food (-11 points) values for Democrats. For Republicans and Independent/Others, agreement continued to be higher and changes overall were more muted, however, these groups also saw reductions in agreement about medicines. For Republicans, agreement with MAHA reflecting their values about medicines dropped from 88% in May to 81% in August and for Independent/Others, agreement dropped from 61% in May to 52% in August.

**Table 2. Proportion of Respondents Who Agreed With the Statement “The ‘Make America Healthy Again’ campaign reflects my values about ...”**

	Food	Medicines	Agriculture
<b>Republican Respondents</b>			
Wave 13 (May 2025)	93%	88%	91%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	91%	81%	90%
<b>Democratic Respondents</b>			
Wave 13 (May 2025)	63%	60%	64%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	53%	39%	48%
<b>Independent/Other Respondents</b>			
Wave 13 (May 2025)	71%	61%	68%
Wave 14 (August 2025)	67%	52%	67%

*Note:* Responses above do not include respondents who were unaware of MAHA prior to the survey.

Beyond support for MAHA generally, in the most recent wave (wave 14), all respondents were asked to rank the importance of each of the four priority areas outlined by the MAHA Commission. Poor diet was most popular, with 36% of respondents indicating this was most important for MAHA to address. Aggregation of environmental chemicals was also commonly prioritized, with 31% of respondents indicating this was most important for MAHA to address. Less common was lack of physical exercise and chronic stress (19% of respondents listed this as most important) and least common was overmedicalization (13% of respondents listed this as most important).



## Conclusions

Using results from the Gardner Food and Agricultural Policy Survey, we discuss public awareness and perceptions of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) campaign. We find that awareness of MAHA remains high and continues to be popular overall, however, support over the last three months, particularly amongst Democratic respondents, has waned some. Results also show that the respondents reported that MAHA is less aligned with their values than three months prior. We find that across parties, respondents' agreement that MAHA reflected their values about medicine dropped. Support for MAHA in both food and agriculture issues also dropped amongst Democrats but remained relatively stable for others. Of the four MAHA Commission priorities, we find the public believes addressing poor diet and aggregation of environmental chemicals are most important.

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