



NEWS RELEASE

Weber-Stephen Products Co.

200 E. Daniels Road
Palatine, IL 60067
847.934.5700
www.weber.com®

NEW NATIONAL POLL: ECONOMY DRIVES AMERICAN GRILL OWNERS' PLANS TO SPEND MORE TIME AND MONEY ON OUTDOOR COOKING THIS YEAR

Palatine, Ill., April 30, 2009 – Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of American outdoor grill owners are planning to grill at home more and eat out less this year, and 74 percent of this group cite the economy as the reason, according to the **20th Annual Weber GrillWatch™ Survey**, the first and most comprehensive objective, third-party study on why, where, when, and how Americans grill.

While the economy is the primary reason they plan to grill more often, it doesn't seem to be having an adverse affect on how much they plan to spend on grilling this year. One-fourth of these grill owners (24 percent) report that they're going to spend *more* on grilling in 2009; 42 percent say that the economy won't affect their grilling spending habits at all; 22 percent aren't sure; and 11 percent say they will spend less.

Additionally, a notable percentage of U.S. grill owners overall (18 percent) report that they'll purchase a new grill this year. Another eight percent say they'll buy some kind of add-on feature to update their current barbecue (such as a smoker box, rotisserie, side burner, etc.), plus seven percent plan to buy more grilling tools and accessories.

Continuing a three-year upward trend, more than half of U.S. grill owners are now grilling "at least" a few times per week (52 percent) during their grilling season compared to 47 percent in 2008, and 43 percent in 2007. They also report spending an average of 5.6 hours grilling per week compared to 4.4 hours in 2008—up a whopping 27 percent. Four percent report grilling more than 20 hours each week.

2009 Grill Ownership and Usage Trends

While more Americans own gas grills overall, the Weber GrillWatch Survey showed charcoal grills were making a significant comeback in ownership and favored use during the last three years. While it may be a blip in this year's Survey responses, the scales may be tipping back to gas. Gas grill ownership increased this year to 68 percent from 63 percent the year before—and charcoal grill ownership decreased from 53 percent in 2008 to this year's 50 percent. Smoker ownership is now at 15 percent with outdoor electric grills at six.

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As for which type of grill they use *most often*, slightly fewer Survey respondents are using charcoal as their primary grill. After enjoying a multi-year increase, the percentage of Americans who use a charcoal grill most often dropped this year to 34 percent from 2008's 38 percent. Conversely, more Americans (60 percent) are now using a gas grill most often compared to last year's 56 percent. The number of those using an electric grill most often has risen slightly from two to three percent over last year.

Twenty-nine percent report owning multiple grills—which has stayed fairly consistent during the last few years. Among owners of different grill types, those who own smokers are most likely to own multiple grills—78 percent say they own more than one—followed by outdoor electric grill owners at 49 percent.

Smoker Interest

Many U.S. grillers are interested in “low and slow” barbecue cooking. While more than two-thirds (68 percent) admit that they don't know how to use a smoker, 41 percent of this group is interested in learning—including 11 percent who are “very interested.” Grill owners under the age of 35 are most enthusiastic in learning how to use a smoker, with 51 percent saying they are at least somewhat interested compared to 41 percent of those between 35 and 54 years of age, and 32 percent of those 55 and older. Overall, U.S. grill owners cite the “taste” (61 percent) and “tenderness” (50 percent) of smoking meats as being its top two benefits. Men (20 percent) are more than twice as likely as women (8 percent) to say the most appealing benefit of barbecuing is that “it takes time and skill to master.”

Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

When asked which meals they grill on a regular basis, 93 percent of grillers say dinner/supper. This jumps to 98 percent for those with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more. More than a third (36 percent) grill lunch on a regular basis; those under age 35 are most likely to grill it regularly (45 percent) compared to those between 35 and 54 (37 percent) and those 55 and older (23 percent). Two percent say they regularly fire up the grill for breakfast or brunch.

Foods on the Grill

When asked to pick the top three foods they grill most often, the order of American grill owners' top picks hasn't changed over the last three years with hamburgers at 69 percent, steak at 47 percent, chicken pieces at 45 percent, and hot dogs at 36 percent.

However, while nearly all grill owners say that they've grilled meat and poultry during the last year (99 percent and 89 percent, respectively), vegetables and fruit (72 percent) and seafood (52 percent) continue to increase in popularity.

Most Popular Grilling Occasions

American grill owners continue to fire up the grill on virtually every major celebration or holiday. While Independence Day once again tops the list at 86 percent, this year birthdays (75 percent) surpassed Labor Day (72 percent) to secure the second position. Memorial Day (68 percent), Father's Day (53 percent), and Mother's Day (42 percent) round out the top six. A significant 11 percent have grilled outdoors on Cinco de Mayo.

Grilling During the Last 20 Years

The majority of American grill owners (64 percent) believe that people are grilling more today than they were 20 years ago, and another 25 percent aren't sure. A larger percentage of grillers believe people are more adventurous at the grill than they were 20 years ago (82 percent) with nine percent of Weber GrillWatch Survey respondents saying "much hasn't changed." Two percent say that people are less adventurous at the grill than they were 20 years ago.

Methodology

Weber-Stephen Products Co. commissioned third-party Greenfield Online and KeyStat Marketing, Inc. to field the 20th Annual Weber GrillWatch Survey. A total of 1,000 grill owners throughout the United States completed the online survey earlier this year.

All respondents were over age 21 and own a charcoal, gas or electric outdoor barbecue grill or smoker. The sample was divided between 50 percent males (n=500) and 50 percent females (n=500) and was balanced demographically to represent households across the U.S.

Weber-Stephen Products Co., headquartered in Palatine, Ill., is the world's premiere manufacturer of charcoal and gas grills, grilling accessories and other outdoor room products. In 1952, founder George Stephen sparked a backyard revolution with his invention of the Weber® kettle. More than 55 years later, the family-owned company remains the industry leader with its Weber®, Weber® Q®, and Ducane® brands. As a leading exporter of grills, Weber brand products are sold worldwide at select home centers, hardware stores, department stores, patio stores, and other retail outlets. Weber has the strongest consumer outreach program in the industry with its Weber Grill-LineSM (1-800-GRILL-OUT®) and a content-rich website with grilling tips, techniques, and original Weber recipes at www.weber.com. The Weber Grill-Line and Weber Customer Service are closed on Christmas.

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