

# Chapter 2: Concerns about food

## Introduction

The FSA's role, set out in law, is to safeguard public health and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. The FSA uses the Food and You 2 survey to monitor consumer concerns about food issues, such as food safety, nutrition, and environmental issues. This chapter provides an overview of respondents' concerns about food.

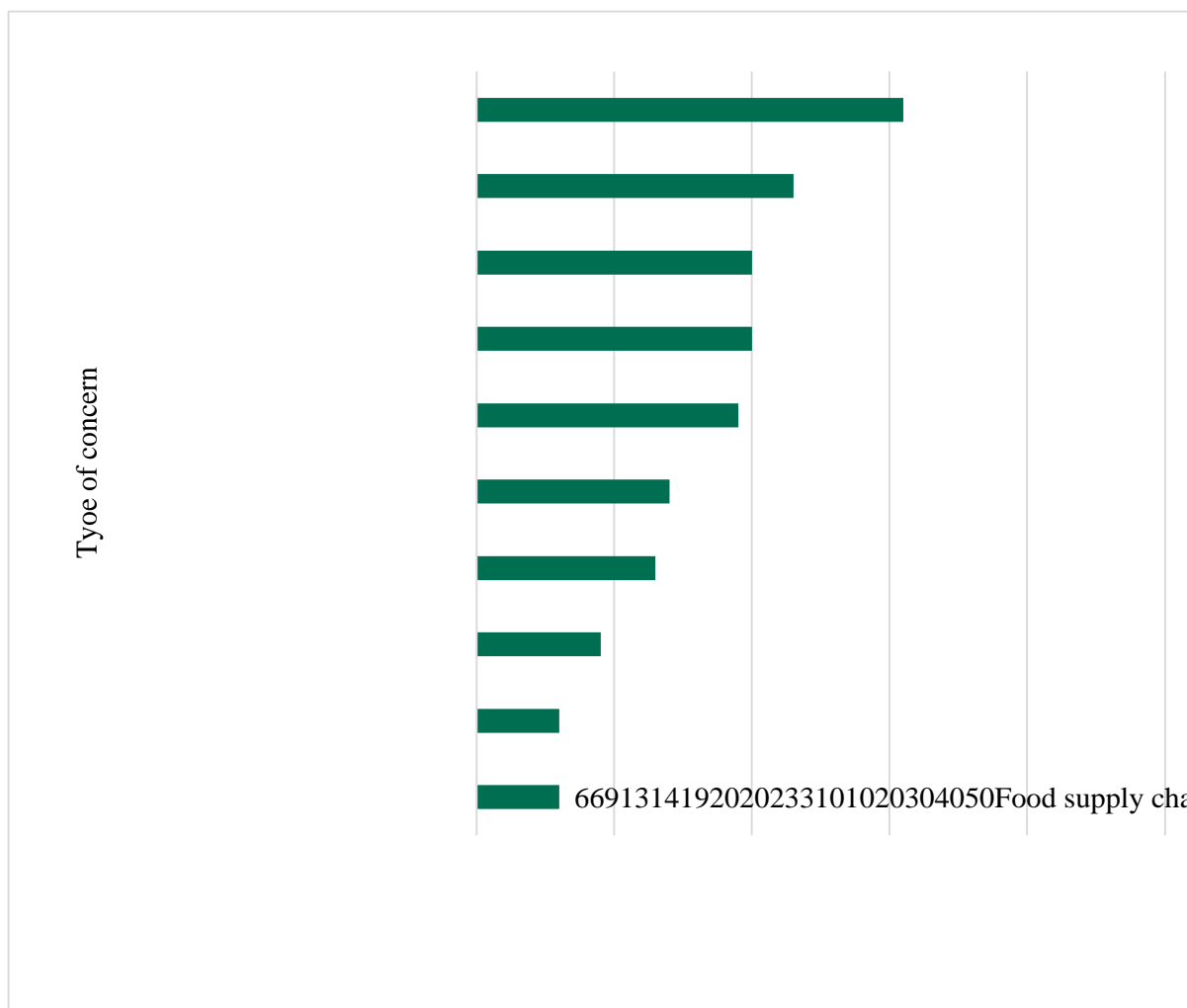
## Common concerns

Respondents were asked to report whether they had any concerns about the food they eat. Most respondents (86%) had no concerns about the food they eat, and 14% of respondents reported that they had a concern [\(footnote 1\)](#).

## Figure 3: Ten most commonly spontaneously expressed food-related concerns

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Type of concern	Percentage of respondents
Food supply chain	6
Food authenticity	6
Food labelling	9
Food provenance	13
Food contamination	14
Food quality	19
Nutrition & health	20
Food safety & hygiene	20
Environmental & ethical	23
Food production methods	31

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 4

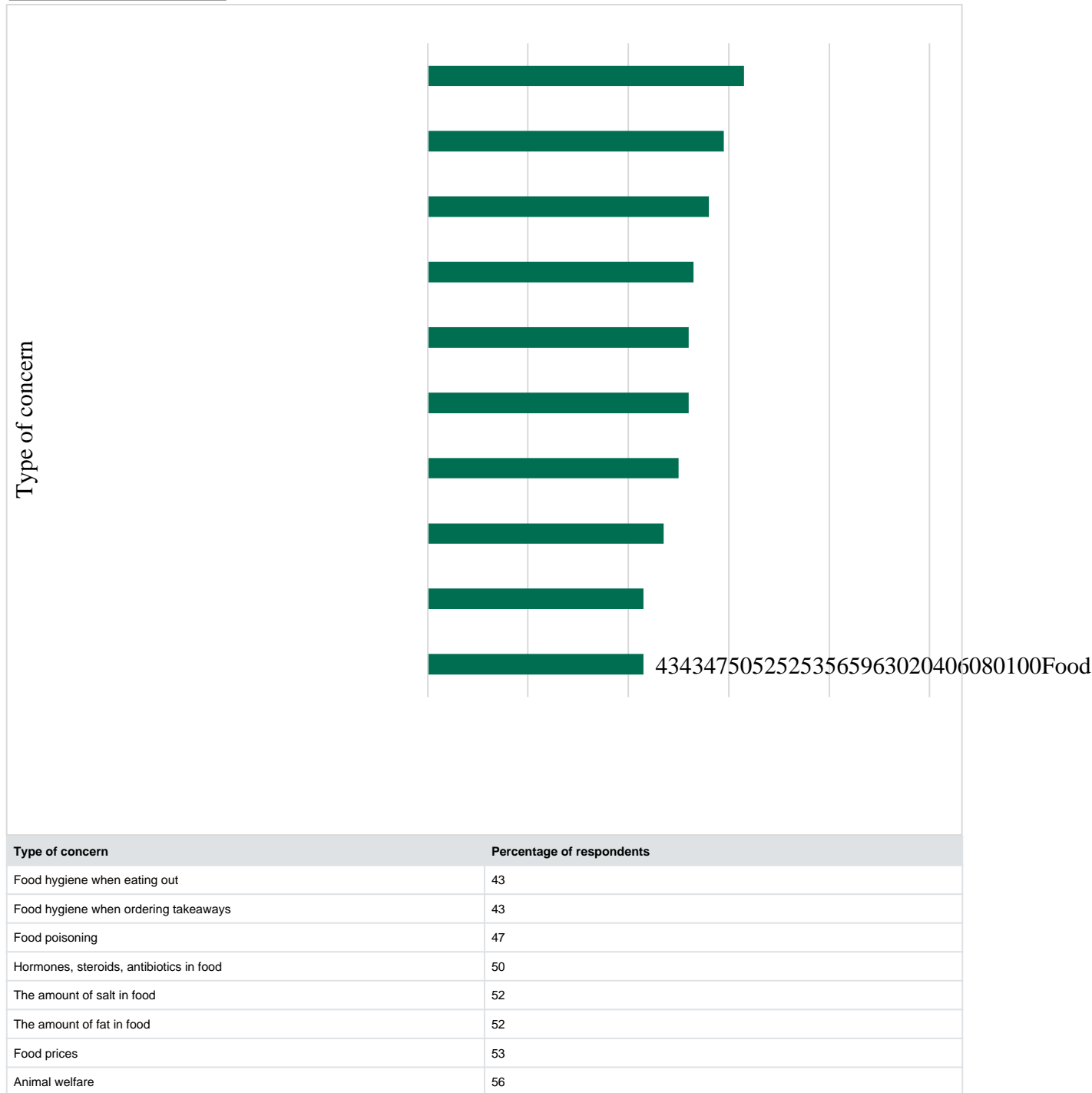
Respondents who reported having a concern were asked to briefly explain what their concerns were about the food they eat. The most common area of concern related to food production methods (31%), which included the use of additives (such as preservatives and colouring) in food products (14%), the use of pesticides / fertiliser to grow food (12%) and how food has been produced / processed (6%) (Figure 3).

The second most common concern related to environmental and ethical concerns, which included animal welfare / treatment of animals (including transportation) (12%), food miles (for example, the distance that food travels) (5%) and the impact of producing / eating meat on the environment (5%) (Figure 3) [\(footnote 2\)](#).

## Figure 4: Ten most common prompted food-related concerns

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Type of concern	Percentage of respondents
The amount of sugar in food	59
Food waste	63

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave

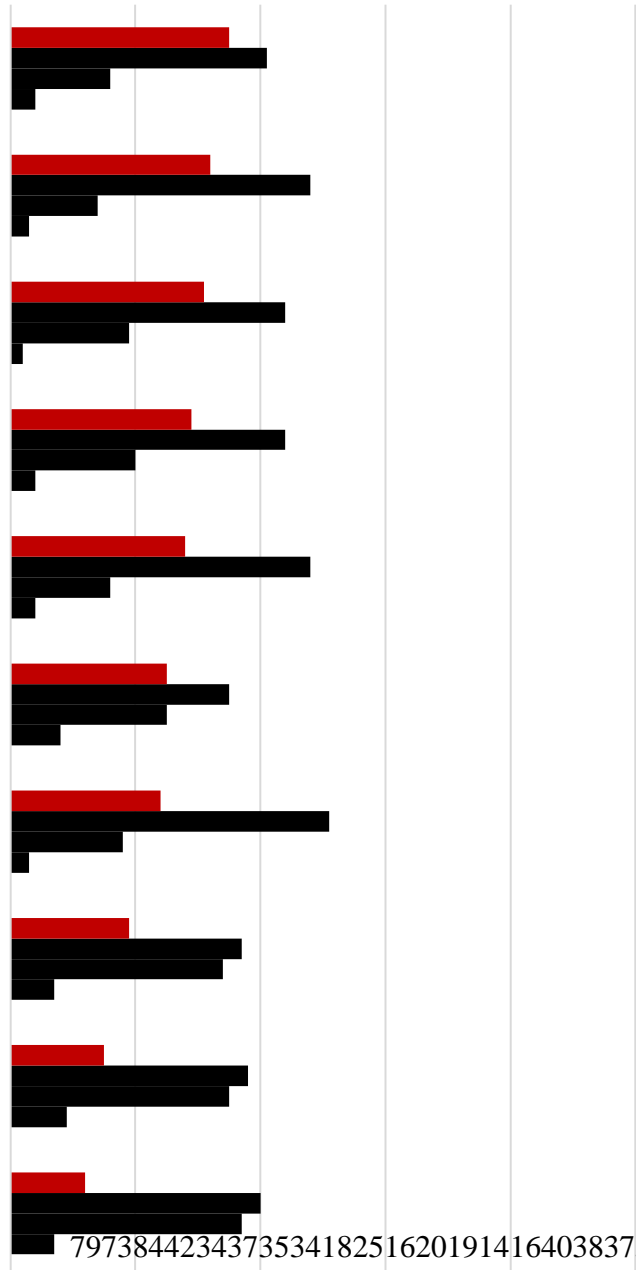
Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about a number of food-related issues, from a list of options. The most common concerns related to food waste (63%), the amount of sugar in food (59%) and animal welfare (56%). Around half of respondents were concerned about food prices (53%), the amount of fat in food (52%), the amount of salt in food (52%) and hormones, steroids and/or antibiotics in food (50%) (Figure 4) [\(footnote 3\)](#).

## Figure 5: Level of concern about food-related topics

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Food-related topic



- Highly concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not very concerned
- Not concerned at all

Food-related topic	Not concerned at all	Not very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Highly concerned
The availability of a wide variety of food	7	37	40	12
Food produced in the UK being what it says it is	9	35	38	15
Food produced in the UK being safe and hygienic	7	34	37	19
Ingredients and additives in food	3	18	51	24
Genetically modified (GM) food	8	25	35	25

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Food-related topic	Not concerned at all	Not very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Highly concerned
Food being produced sustainably	4	16	48	28
Food from outside the UK				
being what it says it is"	4	20	44	29
Food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic	2	19	44	31
Affordability of food	3	14	48	32
Animal welfare in the food production process	4	16	41	35

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Source Food and You 2 Wave 4

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were concerned about a number of specific food-related issues. Respondents were most likely to report a high level of concern about animal welfare in the food production process (35%). Around 3 in 10 respondents reported a high level of concern about the affordability of food (32%) and food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic (31%) (Figure 5) ([footnote 4](#)).

1. Question: Do you have any concerns about the food you eat? Responses: Yes, No. Base= 4786, all online respondents and all those who completed the 'Eating at Home' paper questionnaire.
2. Question: What are your concerns about the food you eat? Responses: [Open text]. Base= 666, all respondents with concerns about the food they eat. Please note: additional responses are available in the [full data set and tables](#), responses were coded by Ipsos, see [Technical Report](#) for further details.
3. Question: Do you have concerns about any of the following? Responses: The amount of sugar in food, Food waste, Animal welfare, Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food, The amount of salt in food, The amount of fat in food, Food poisoning, Food hygiene when eating out, Food hygiene when ordering takeaways, The use of pesticides, Food fraud or crime, The use of additives (for example, preservatives and colouring), Food prices, Genetically modified (GM) foods, Chemical contamination from the environment, Food miles, The number of calories in food, Food allergen information, Cooking safely at home, None of these, Don't know. Base= 3745, all online respondents.
4. Question: Thinking about food in the UK [question wording variation in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] today, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? A) Affordability of food B) Food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; [in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic C) Food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic D) Food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is E) Food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is F) Food being produced sustainably G) The availability of a wide variety of food H) Animal welfare in the food production process I) Ingredients and additives in food J) Genetically modified (GM) food. Base= 3745, all online respondents. Please note: some question wording was modified for

respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.