

F&Y2 Wave 5-6 NI: 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. In Northern Ireland, the FSA is also responsible for [nutrition policy](#). The FSA uses the Food and You 2 survey to monitor consumers' concerns about food issues, such as food safety, nutrition, and environmental issues. This chapter provides an overview of respondents' concerns about food.

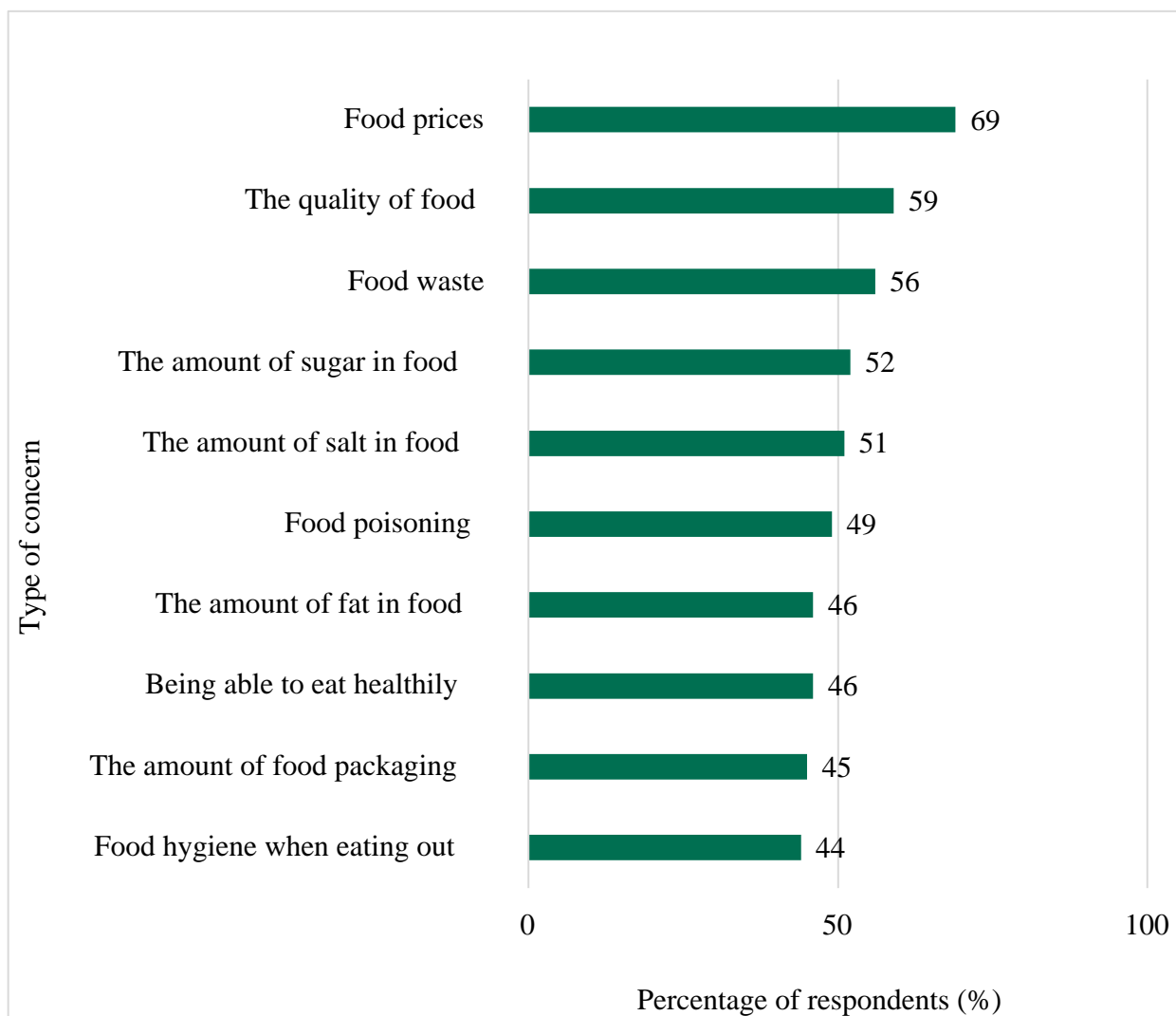
Common concerns

Respondents were asked to report whether they had any concerns about the food they eat. Most respondents (81%) had no concerns about the food they eat, and 19% of respondents reported that they had a concern ([footnote 1](#)).

Figure 3. Ten most common prompted food-related concerns.

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Type of concern	Percentage of respondents (%)
Food hygiene when eating out	44
The amount of food packaging	45
Being able to eat healthily	46
The amount of fat in food	46
Food poisoning	49
The amount of salt in food	51
The amount of sugar in food	52
Food waste	56
The quality of food	59
Food prices	69

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 6

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 prices (69%), the quality of food (59%) and food waste (56%). Around half of respondents were concerned about the amount of sugar in food (52%), and the amount of salt in food (51%) (Figure 3) [\(footnote 2\)](#).

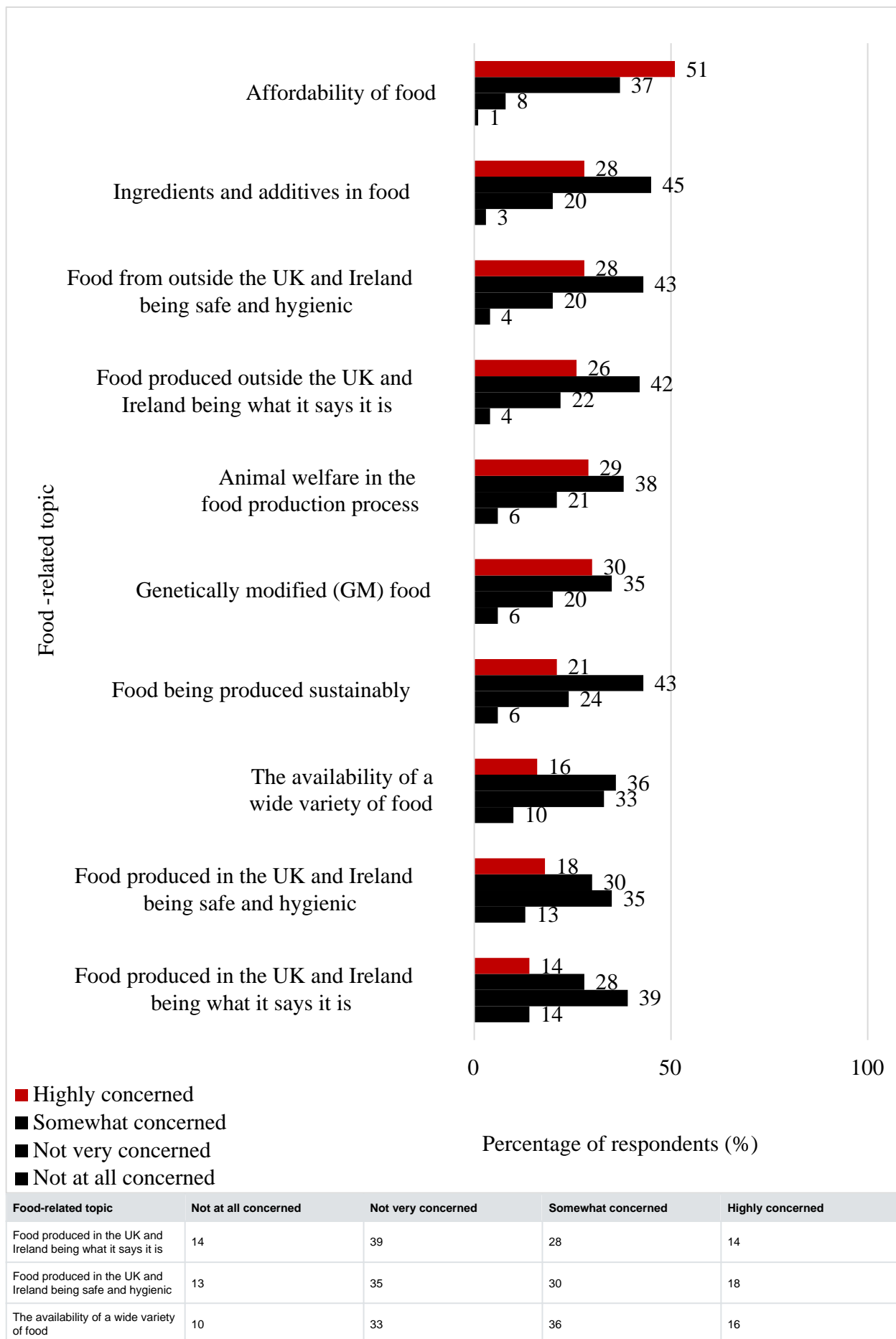
Food concerns differed between different groups of people:

- **age group:** Respondents aged over 55 were more likely to be concerned about the quality of food than younger adults. For example, 70% of those aged 55-64 years reported being concerned about the quality of food compared to 50% of those aged 25-34 years.
- **food security:** Those with high food security were more likely to be concerned about the amount of sugar (58%), the amount of salt (58%) and the amount of fat (52%) in food than those with very low food security (37%, 39%, and 34% respectively).

Figure 4. Level of concern about food-related topics.

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Food-related topic	Not at all concerned	Not very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Highly concerned
Food being produced sustainably	6	24	43	21
Genetically modified (GM) food	6	20	35	30
Animal welfare in the food production process	6	21	38	29
Food produced outside the UK and Ireland being what it says it is	4	22	42	26
Food from outside the UK and Ireland being safe and hygienic	4	20	43	28
Ingredients and additives in food	3	20	45	28
Affordability of food	1	8	37	51

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 6

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 the affordability of food (51%), and genetically modified (GM) food (30%). Around 3 in 10 respondents reported a high level of concern around animal welfare in the food production process (29%), ingredients and additives in food (28%) and food produced outside the UK and Ireland being safe and hygienic (28%) (Figure 4) ([footnote 3](#)).

1. Question: Do you have any concerns about the food you eat? Responses: Yes, No. Base= 1644, all online respondents and all those who completed the 'Eating at Home' paper questionnaire in Northern Ireland. Wave 6.
2. 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= 1037, all online respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 6.
3. 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 the UK and Ireland being safe and hygienic C) Food from outside the UK and Ireland being safe and hygienic D) Food produced in the UK and Ireland being what it says it is E) Food from outside 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= 1644, all online respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 6. Please note: some question wording was modified for respondents in England and Wales, question stated 'UK' rather than 'UK and Ireland'.