

# F&Y2 Wave 7-8 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

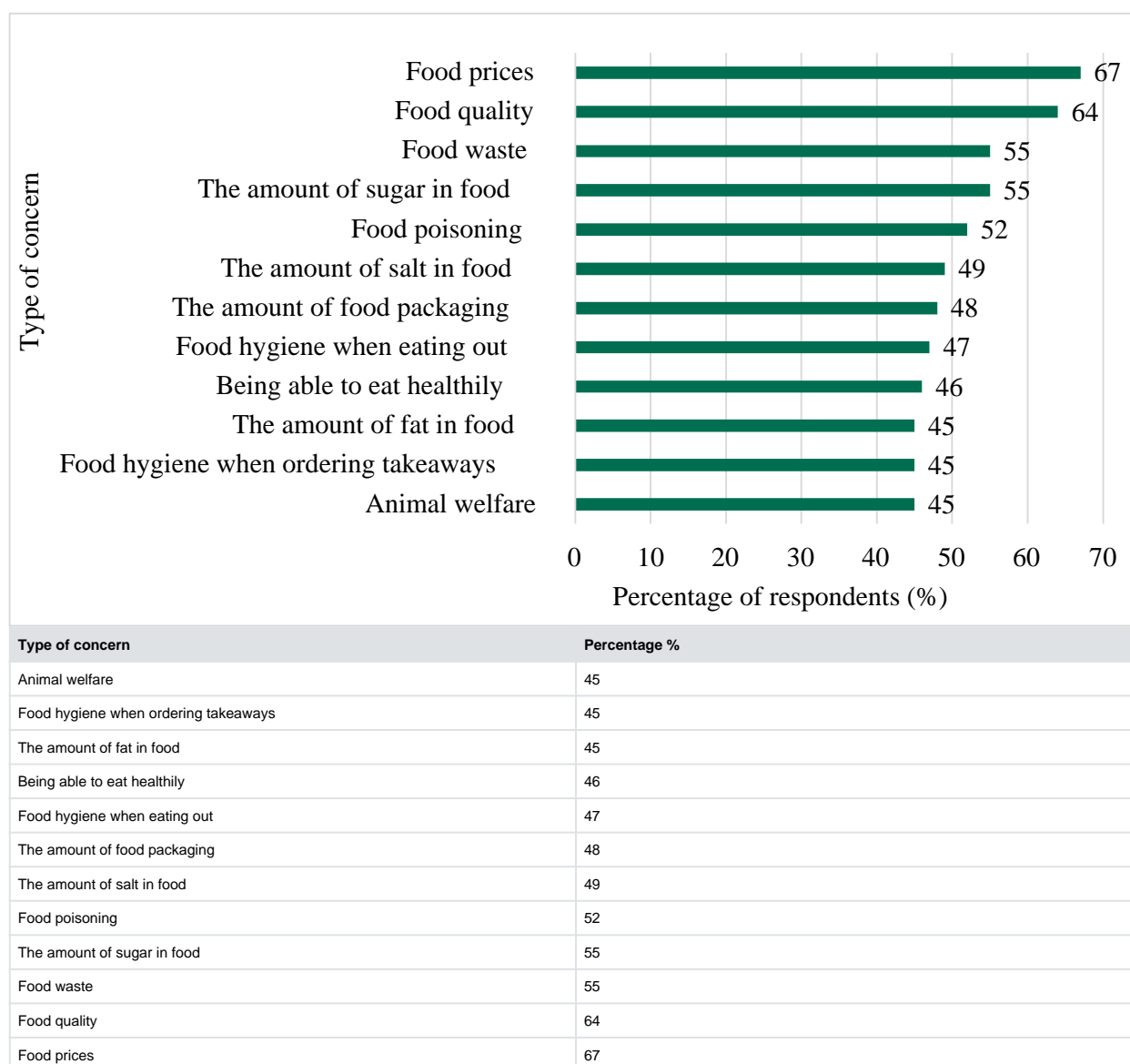
Respondents were asked to spontaneously report whether they had any concerns about the food they eat. Most respondents (83%) had no concerns about the food they eat, and 17% of respondents reported that they had a concern. [\(footnote 1\)](#)

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, prompted by a list of options. The most common concerns related to food prices (67%) and food quality (64%), followed by food waste (55%) and the amount of sugar in food (55%). Around half were concerned about food poisoning (52%), the amount of salt in food (49%), the amount of food packaging (48%), and food hygiene when eating out (47%) (Figure 3). [\(footnote 2\)](#)

**Figure 3. Most common (top 12) prompted food-related concerns.**

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 8

Food concerns differed between different groups of people:

- Gender: Women were more likely to be concerned about food poisoning (58%) and food prices (72%) than men (46% and 62% respectively).
- Age: respondents in older age groups were more likely to be concerned about a range of food issues compared to younger respondents. For example, those aged 65-74 were more likely to be concerned about food hygiene when eating out (57%), amount of salt (67%), sugar (72%) and fat in food (61%), food waste (75%), quality of food (76%), the amount of food packaging (63%) and being able to eat healthily (63%), compared to those aged 25-34 (food hygiene when eating out; 38%, amount of salt; 33%, sugar; 40%, and fat in food; 35%, food waste; 48%, quality of food; 57%, the amount of food packaging; 39%, and being able to eat healthily; 36%).
- Households without children under 6 were more likely to be concerned about food hygiene when eating out (49%) and food hygiene when ordering takeaways (46%) compared to households with young children (aged 6 or under) (36% and 36% respectively). They were

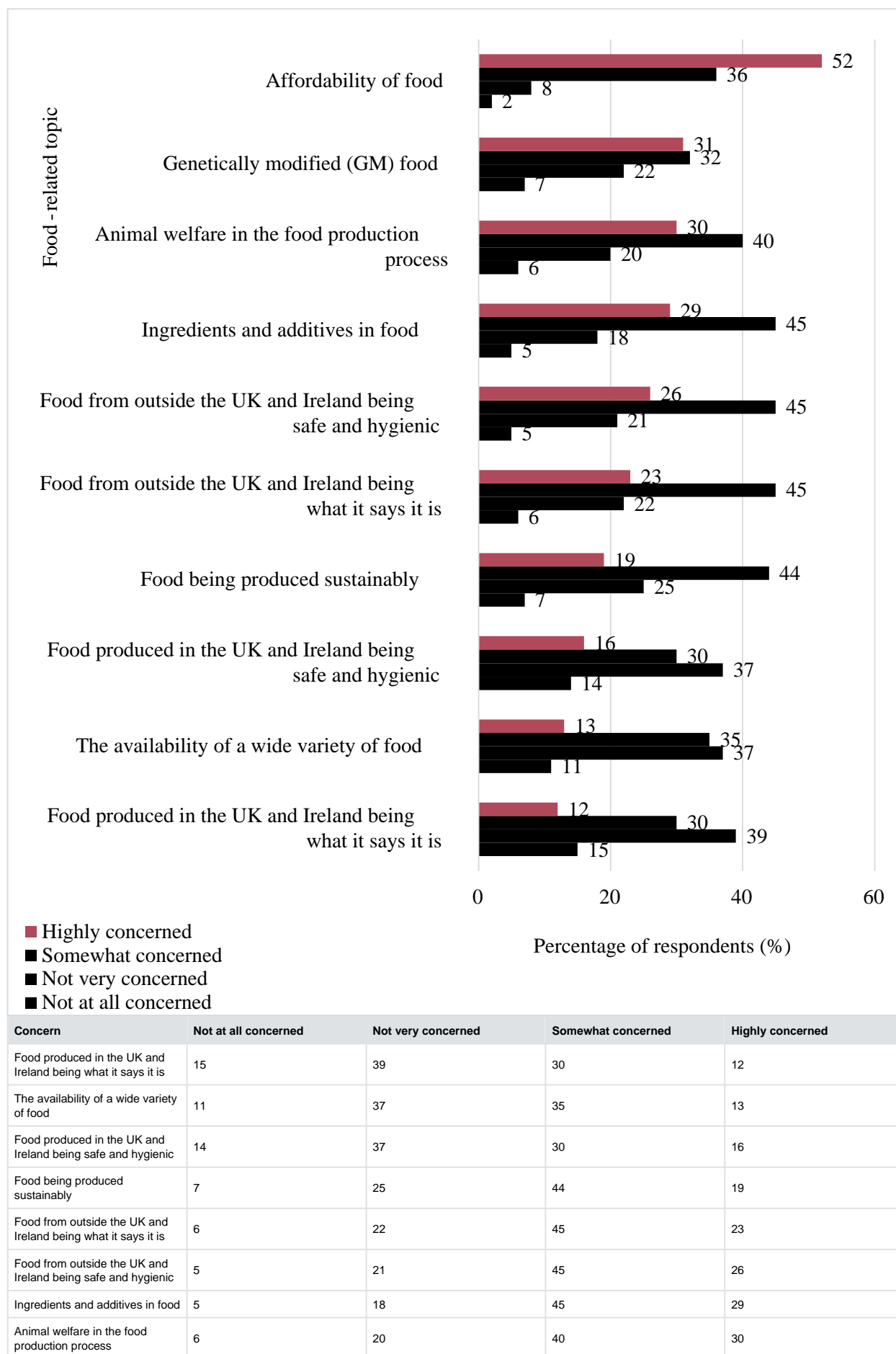
also more likely to be concerned about the amount of salt in food (51%, compared with 39%).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were concerned about specific food-related issues. Respondents were most likely to report a high level of concern about the affordability of food (52%), followed by genetically modified (GM) food (31%), animal welfare in the food production process (30%), and ingredients and additives in food (29%). Around a quarter of respondents reported a high level of concern about food from outside the UK and Ireland being safe and hygienic (26%) and food from outside the UK and Ireland being what it says it is (23%) (Figure 4). [\(footnote 3\)](#)

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

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| Concern                        | Not at all concerned | Not very concerned | Somewhat concerned | Highly concerned |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Genetically modified (GM) food | 7                    | 22                 | 32                 | 31               |
| Affordability of food          | 2                    | 8                  | 36                 | 52               |

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 8

1. Question: Do you have any concerns about the food you eat? Responses: Yes, No. Base = 1,550, all respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 8.
2. Question: Do you have concerns about any of the following? Responses: Cooking safely at home; Food poisoning (e.g. Salmonella and E. Coli); Food hygiene when eating out; Food hygiene when ordering takeaways; The use of pesticides; The use of additives (e.g. preservatives and colouring); Chemical contamination from the environment (e.g. lead in food); Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food; Genetically Modified (GM) foods; Food prices; Food allergen information (e.g. availability and accuracy); The amount of salt in food; The amount of sugar in food; The amount of fat in food; The number of calories in food; Food waste; Animal welfare; Food miles (e.g. the distance food travels); Food fraud or crime (e.g. food not being what the label says it is); Being able to eat healthily; The quality of food; The amount of food packaging; None of these; Don't know. Base= 997, all online respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 8.
3. Question: Thinking about food in 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 = 1,550, all respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 8.