

FSA Strategy Stage 2- Omnibus Survey

Research Findings

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Background & Objectives

- In Jan/Feb 2014 Harris Interactive undertook an Omnibus study on behalf of the FSA to support the development of the FSA Strategy 2015 – 2020.
- Since then, much work has been done on the strategy including Citizens' Forums and internal stakeholder sessions, which have been documented in a recently published Board Paper.
- A second stage of consumer research was needed to further explore areas within the strategy such as :
 - **definition of consumers' interests in relation to food**
 - **what consumers think should be included in a "Consumer Food Charter"**
 - **a definition of responsibilities for consumer protection in relation to food**
- To achieve this, an Omnibus survey was recommended as it quickly canvasses the opinions of a representative sample of 2,000 members of the GB public.

Approach & Panel

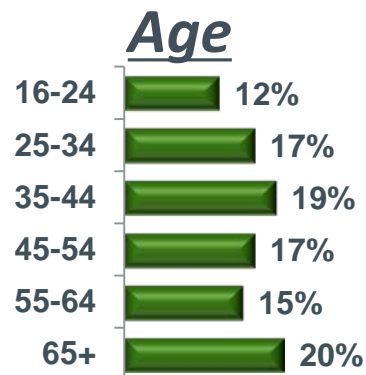
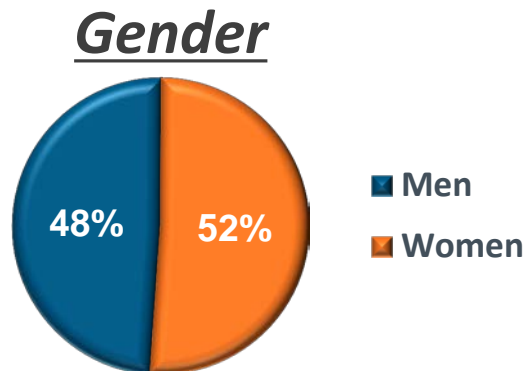
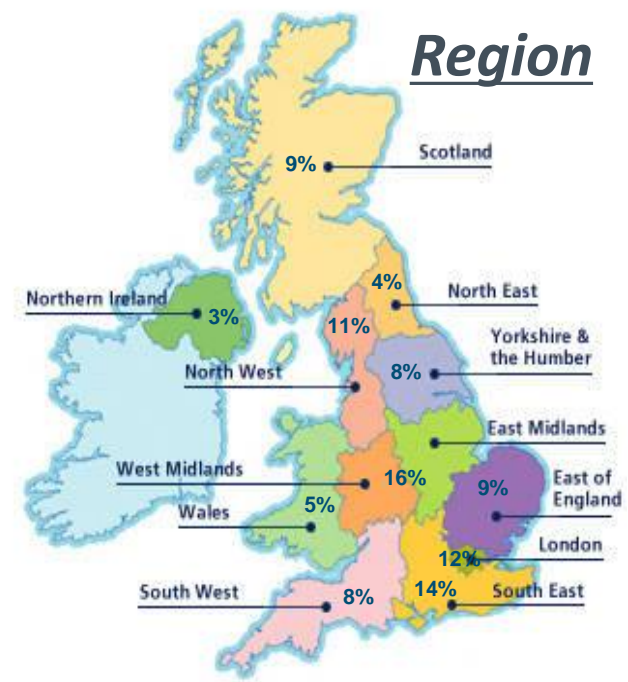
- We conducted an online omnibus survey with 2,173 adults aged 16+ across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The survey took place using the Harris Interactive online panel
- The Harris Interactive Omnibus consists of members of the general public who have opted in and voluntarily agreed to participate in online research studies. Through careful recruitment and management, we are able to rapidly survey large numbers of the general population to represent the views of the nation.
- We have over 100,000 active panellists in the UK and our panel is used solely for market and opinion research. Members are contacted at random and invited to take part in a survey.



Omnibus Audience – a representative sample

- The results of the study were weighted to best reflect the size and shape of the population of the UK
- This means that the results in this report reflect an audience that is as true as possible of the population with the same age, gender and regional profile. The audience profile is detailed below.
- Of course not everyone in GB has internet access, but online panel research results are considered to be extremely accurate. In fact, according to the British Polling Council, Harris Interactive was the most accurate *online* polling company during the last UK elections in 2010:

<http://www.britishpollingcouncil.org/press100508.html>





Please note all results are based on England, Northern Ireland & Wales

Scotland has been excluded from these results.

Therefore, the base size excluding Scotland is 1,995 instead of 2,173.

Key Findings

- Respondents were asked to tell us in their own words how the FSA should protect consumers' interests in relation to food, the three key themes that emerged were:
 - Having food that is safe to eat **(26%)**
 - Ensuring the preparation and storage of food is clean **(22%)**
 - Having regulations and legislations that are followed **(22%)**
- According to our respondents, the FSA's definition of the '**interests of consumers in relation to food**':
 - Is easy to understand **(65%)**
 - Shows that the FSA understands consumer needs **(62%)**
 - Is comprehensive **(61%)**
 - Gives people confidence in the FSA **(59%)**
- **61%** of people said that the current definition included all that is should
- Only **10%** believed that there were aspects of the definition that should not be included such as, the focus on affordability **(5%)**
- When asked which part of the Food Standards Agency's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food' do you think the FSA should focus on, respondents told us that the core focus should be on ensuring food is safe and fit for consumption **(47%)**

Key Findings (2)

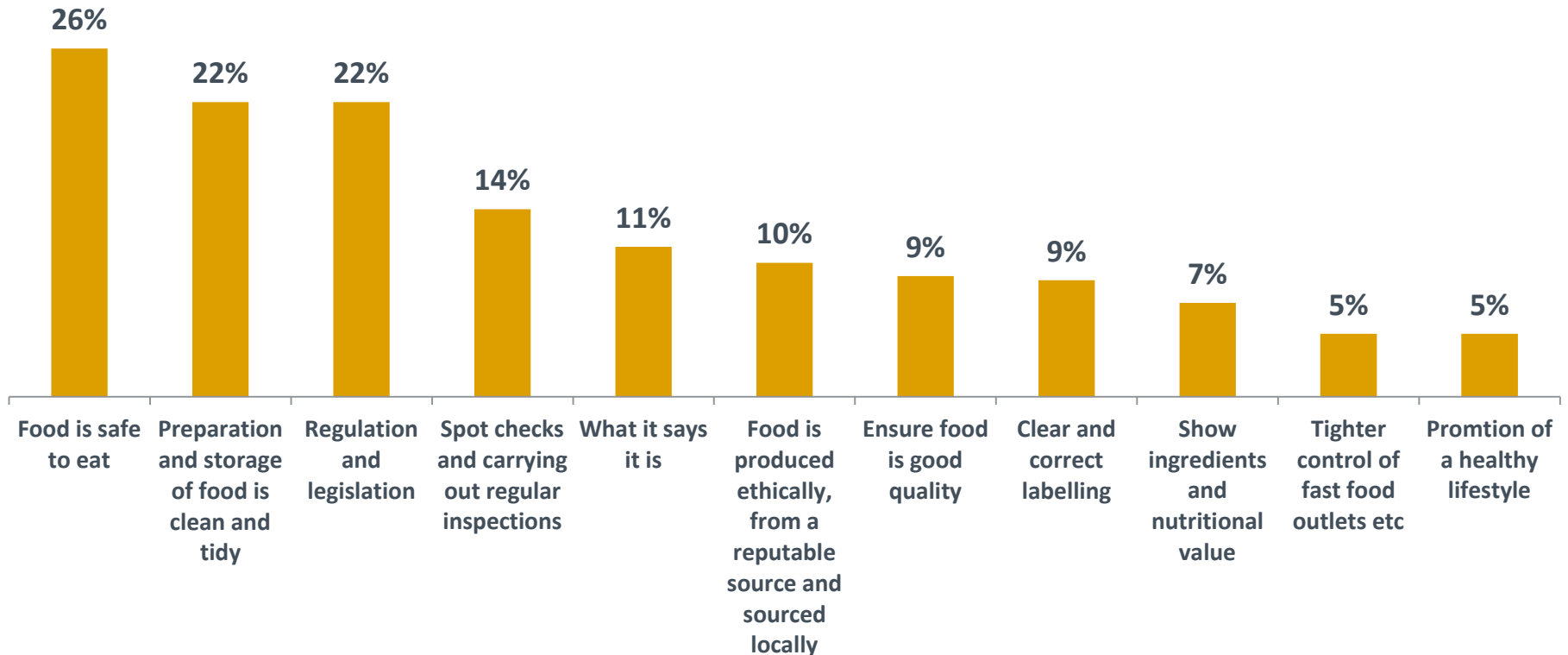
- Respondents were asked to review the 3 consumer rights included in the FSA's 'Consumer Food Charter' and comment on their importance:
 - **84%** of people believed the consumer rights included are the most important ones
- **80%** agree that having a 'Consumer Food Charter' in place is important. Reasons for this included:
 - Ensuring food safety (**16%**)
 - Setting out and maintaining standards (**11%**)
 - Protecting the consumer (**11%**)
- Respondents believed that the FSA's definition of **responsibilities to protect consumers**:
 - Is clear and easy to understand (**70%**)
 - Matches expectations (**68%**)
 - Is a fair split of responsibilities (**67%**)
 - Gives people confidence in the FSA (**63%**)

Key Findings (3)

- **Over 90%** agreed that storing and cooking food safely, keeping food at correct temperatures and cooking it thoroughly are all **consumer responsibilities**.
- When asked about food labels, two-thirds of people (**66%**) believed that they have the correct amount of information on them.
- Respondents were presented with several possible straplines the FSA might use to communicate its strategy and purpose and were asked to rank the three straplines that best represent the FSA's aspirations to protect consumers, give people the information they need and deliver a better food future. Two similar straplines performed the best :
 - 'Food we can trust' (**40% put it in their top 3 choices**)
 - 'For food we can trust' (**38% put it in their top 3 choices**)

Consumers believe that making sure that food is safe to eat is the most important way for the FSA to protect their interests in relation to food (open)

How should the FSA protect consumer interests in relation to food? (open)



Only themes with a total above 5% are included – see slide 10 for smaller themes

Q1: A key purpose of the Food Standards Agency is to 'protect public health and the interests of consumers in relation to food'. Please take a moment to think about what this means to you and your household. Using the box below, please tell us how you believe the FSA should protect your interests in relation to food.

Base 1995

Verbatim comments from 'How should the FSA protect consumer interests in relation to food? (open)'

"They need to ensure that the food we eat either in or out of the home is fit for human consumption"

"Have enough inspectors in place to check that health and safety rules are obeyed in all restaurants, fast food outlets and supermarkets"

"To ensure that the food hygiene in each restaurant is checked without warning regularly and health and safety rules are checked every six months"

"make sure food is good quality, safe to eat, and does not include any unwanted ingredients"

"By making sure what is written in the ingredients, is what is in the meal"

"Make sure that the ingredients that go into the food are those that are listed"

"check, inspect supermarkets, restaurants, cafes, and takeaway places to ensure that food is fresh and cooked well"

"Ensure food is an acceptable quality and prepared and served in safe, clean conditions"

"Make sure companies involved in supplying food have good and ethical practices"

"the key is accurate and honest labelling, so that we know what is in our food and where it comes from"

"I want my family to have wholesome, nutritious food, that provides them with the energy and fibre they need for a healthy life"

Q1: A key purpose of the Food Standards Agency is to '**protect public health and the interests of consumers in relation to food**'. Please take a moment to think about what this means to you and your household. Using the box below, please tell us how you believe the FSA should protect your interests in relation to food.

Other themes that show how consumers believe the FSA should protect their interests in relation to food (open)

Heavy fines and warnings needed **(3%)**

Ensuring that the horse meat scandal does not happen again **(2%)**

Educate the people about food safety - cooking/storage etc **(2%)**

Inform the general public of any issues/food related dangers **(1%)**

More options for vegetarians/be clear on what is vegetarian food **(1%)**

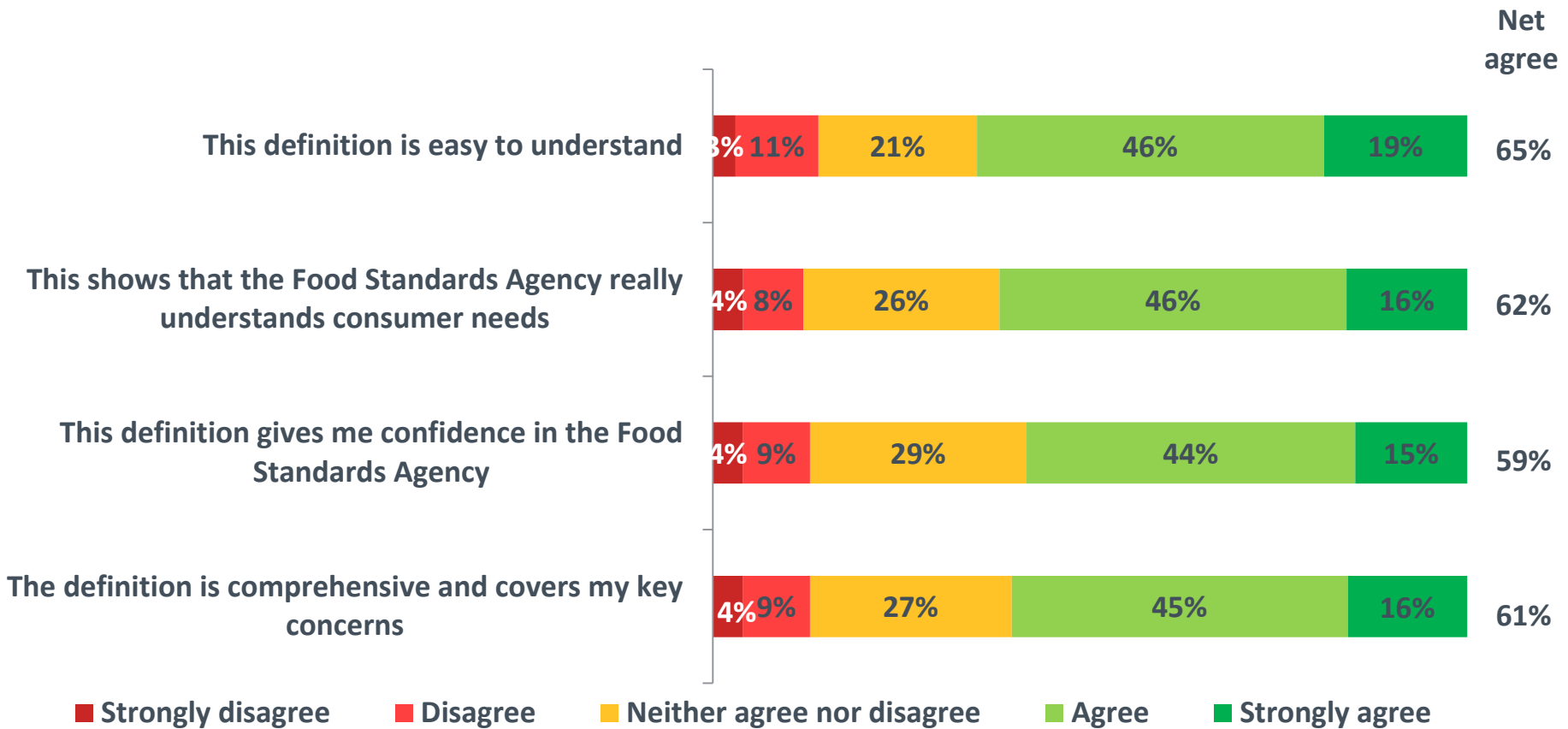
Control imported food **(1%)**

Q1: A key purpose of the Food Standards Agency is to 'protect public health and the interests of consumers in relation to food'. Please take a moment to think about what this means to you and your household. Using the box below, please tell us how you believe the FSA should protect your interests in relation to food.

Base 1995

Agreement with all the statements is relatively strong. 'This definition is easy to understand' had the highest level of agreement (65%).

'Food is safe and what it says it is and we can afford enough of it for a healthy life, and have choices about what we eat, now and in the future.'



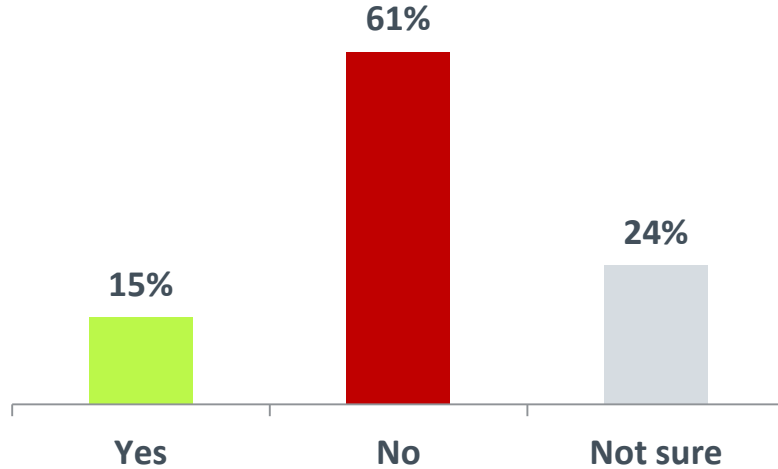
Q2: Below is how the Food Standards Agency proposes a definition of the 'interests of consumers in relation to food'. Please read through this definition and tell us how much you agree that it is described by the statements below.

Base 1995

The majority of people (61%) did not think anything was missing from the FSA's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food'

'Food is safe and what it says it is and we can afford enough of it for a healthy life, and have choices about what we eat, now and in the future.'

Is anything missing from the FSA's definition of 'interests in relation to consumer food'?



Suggestions for what else should be included

"There should be a reference to food hygiene preparation in both factories and restaurants"

"It needs to be more simple, as in easier to understand"

Hygiene/cleanliness/preparation of food (2%)

It should be written in Plain English (2%)

"Food is guaranteed to be safe as it has been rigorously checked"

"It should cover how ethically the food has been sourced."

Food is safe/is it fit for human consumption (2%)

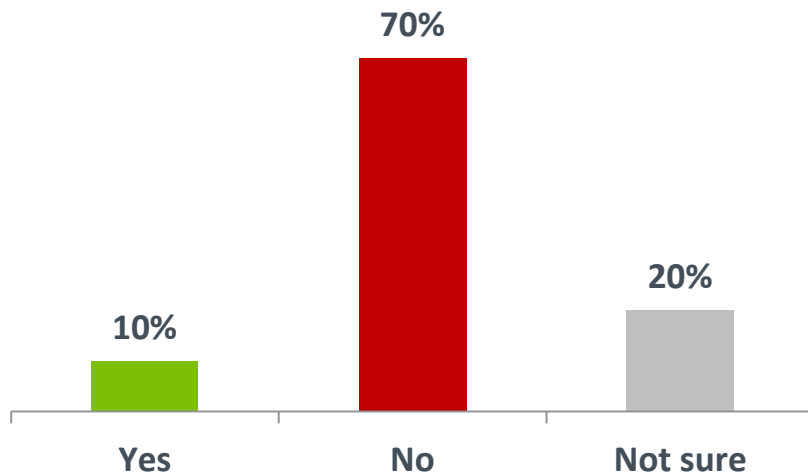
Food produced in a fair and sustainable way/ethically sourced (2%)

Q3a: Do you think anything is missing from the Food Standards Agency's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food'?

10% thought there were aspects that should not be included in the FSA's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food'. Affordability was most mentioned

'Food is safe and what it says it is and we can afford enough of it for a healthy life, and have choices about what we eat, now and in the future.'

Is anything mentioned in the FSA's definition that you think should not be included?



Comments on what should not be included

"Whether or not we can afford it doesn't seem to me to be part of food "standards"

Affordability (5%)

"I think the sentence is too long"

Not in plain English (1%)

Q3b: Is anything mentioned in the Food Standards Agency's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food' that you think should not be included?
Base 1995

Nearly half (47%) of people believed that the FSA should focus on food being safe and fit for consumption

Which part of the definition do you think the FSA should focus on? (open)

'Food is safe and what it says it is and we can afford enough of it for a healthy life, and have choices about what we eat, now and in the future.'

"That food conforms to UK health and safety standards."

47%



Food is safe/food safety/fit for consumption/food is important

"Concentrate on actually making sure food is actually what it says it is"

16%



What it says it is

"Meets nutritional needs of consumers"

9%



Healthy food/a healthy life

"Making food affordable for everyone"

7%



Affordability

"It should all receive equal focus"

5%



All of it/everything is important

Only themes with a total above 5% are included

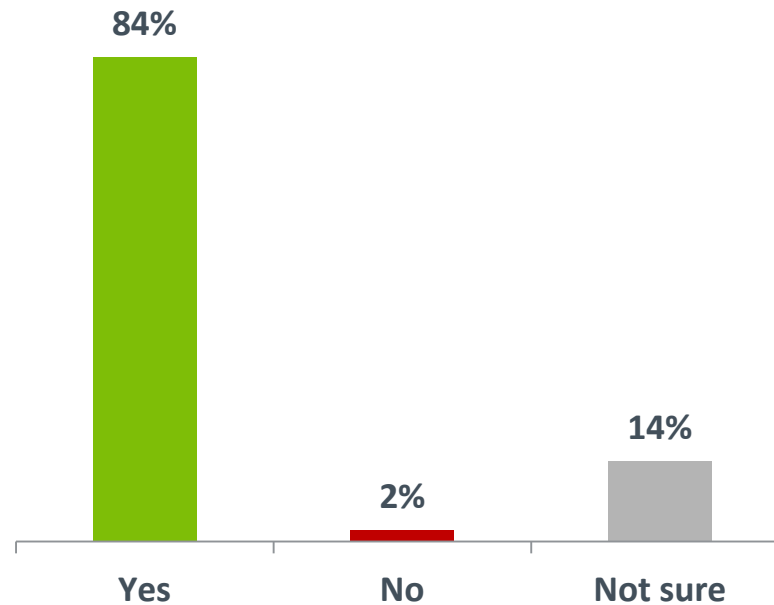
Q3c: Which part of the Food Standards Agency's definition of 'interests of consumers in relation to food' do you think the

Food Standards Agency should focus on?

Base 1995

The majority of people (84%) believed that the 3 consumer rights are the most important ones for the 'Consumer Food Charter'.

Are the 3 consumer rights outlined in the Consumer Food Charter the most important ones?



3 consumer rights outlined in the Consumer Food Charter:

- Consumers have the right to be protected
- Consumers have the right to make choices knowing the facts
- Consumers have the right to the best food future we can deliver

Q4a: The Food Standards Agency is developing a 'Consumer Food Charter' which outlines consumers' rights in relation to food. Do you feel that these three consumer rights are the most important ones?

Base 1995

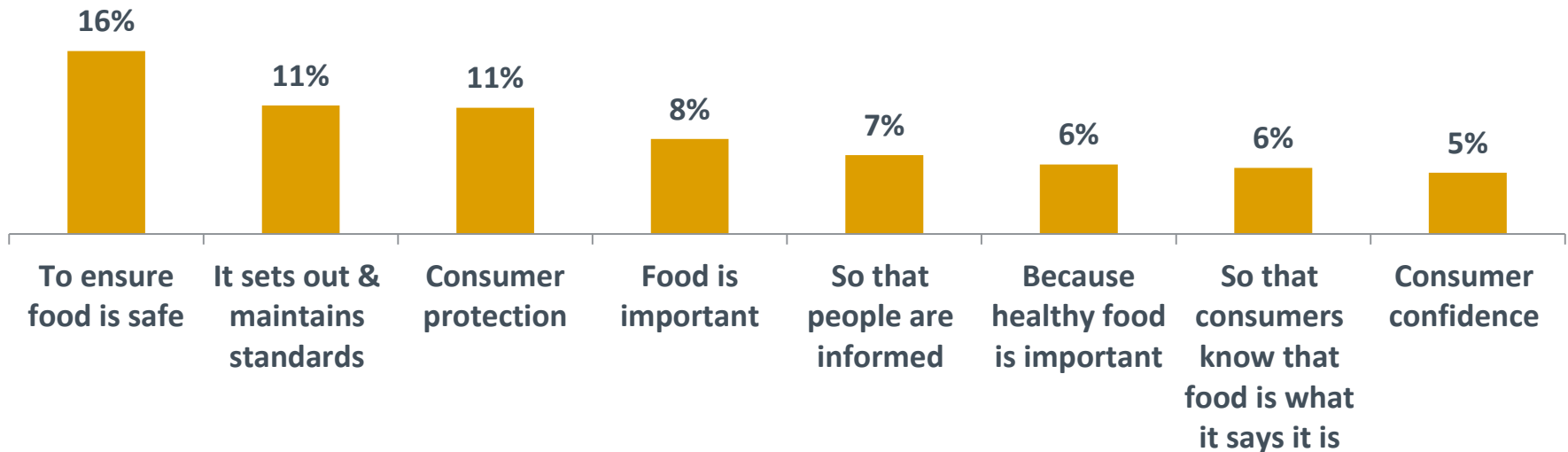
80% of people believe that having a 'Consumer Food Charter' in place is important. Ensuring food is safe (16%) was seen as the greatest reason behind this.

How important is it to you that such a 'Consumer Food Charter' is in place?

Net importance



■ Not at all important ■ Not very important ■ Neither important nor unimportant ■ Important ■ Very important



Only themes with a total above 5% are included

Q4b: How important is it to you that such a 'Consumer Food Charter' is in place?

Base 1995



Q4c: Why do you say this?

Base 1995

Verbatim comments from 'Why do you say it is important that such a 'Consumer Food Charter' is in place?' (open)

"It is important to have the guidelines for food safety laid out so that the public can ensure that their food is safe"

"Food is fundamentally one of the most important things in life people need to be responsible for"

"It is important we know what is in our food, where it came from and how it was prepared"

"I believe consumers should be protected and that retailers know there is a government body in place to protect consumer"

"I like to know that the food I feed my family is safe and as healthy as possible"

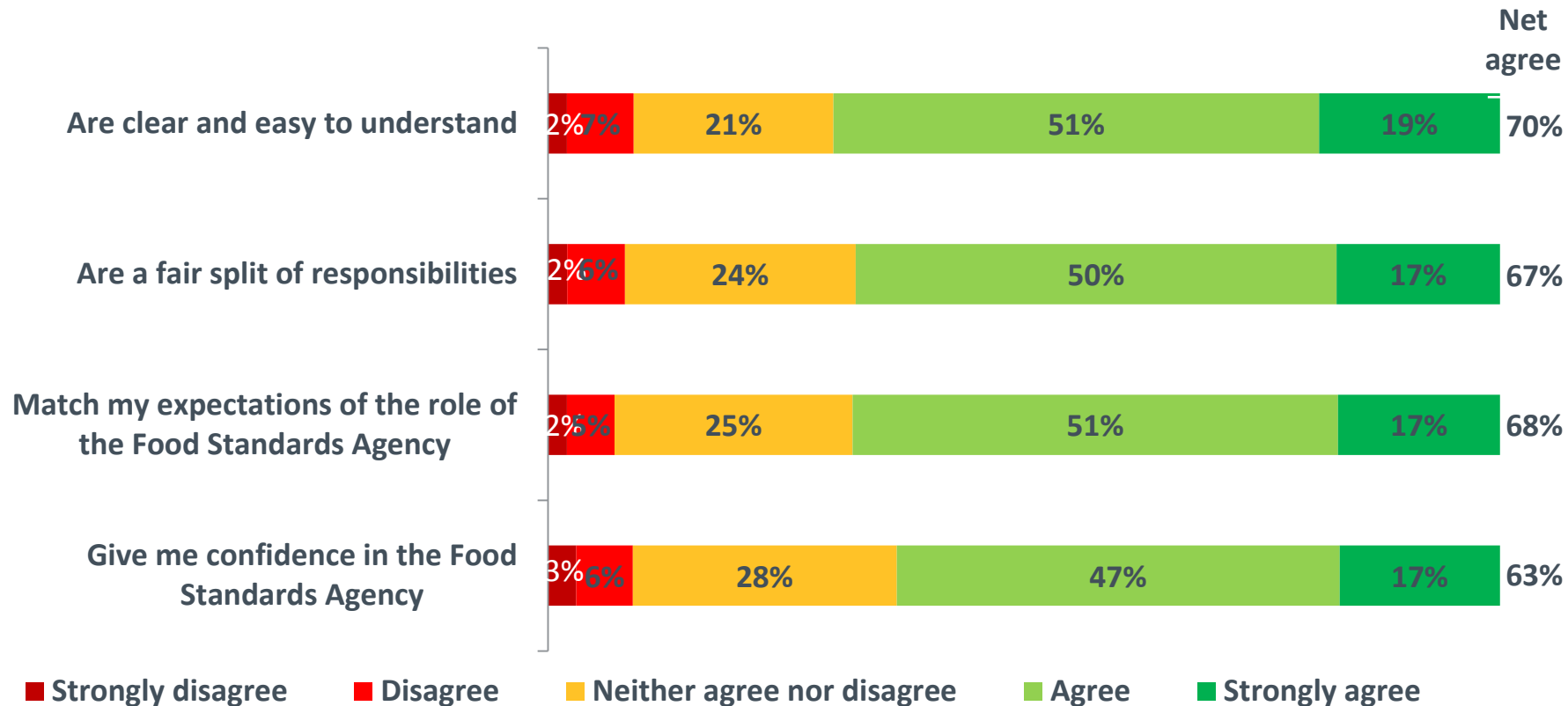
"A charter sets a benchmark that is clear and an exacting point of reference for significant issues"

"People need to be informed so they can make the correct decisions on what to purchase"

"it's important because it safeguards the consumer from abuses within the food industry"

There were similar levels of agreement across all of the statements on the FSA's responsibilities for consumer protection

'It is the responsibility of people supplying food to ensure it is safe and what it says it is and the Food Standards Agency has a key role to play in making sure they step up to that responsibility.
It is the responsibility of the consumer to manage the risks relating to food that they can effect. They have a right to be informed about those risks. The Food Standards Agency has a key role to play in encouraging and supporting consumers to take appropriate action.'

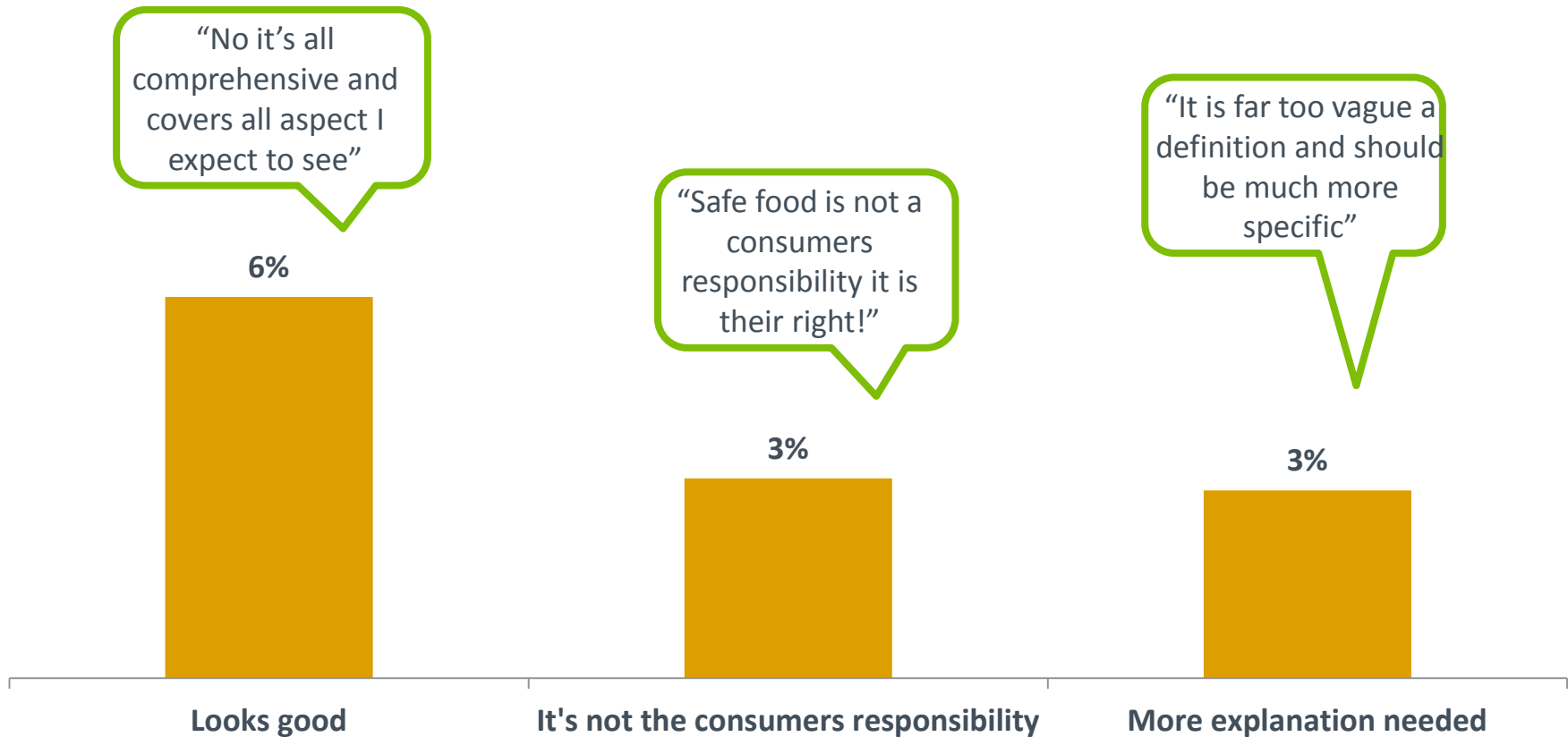


Q7a: The Food Standards Agency has defined responsibilities for consumer protection. How much do you agree with the responsibilities laid out here...

Base 1995

Very few respondents felt that there were aspects missing or that needed changing in the definition of responsibilities for consumer protection

Are there any aspects you feel are missing or should be changed?



Only themes with a total above 3% are included

Q7b: Are there any aspects you feel are missing or should be changed?
Base 1995

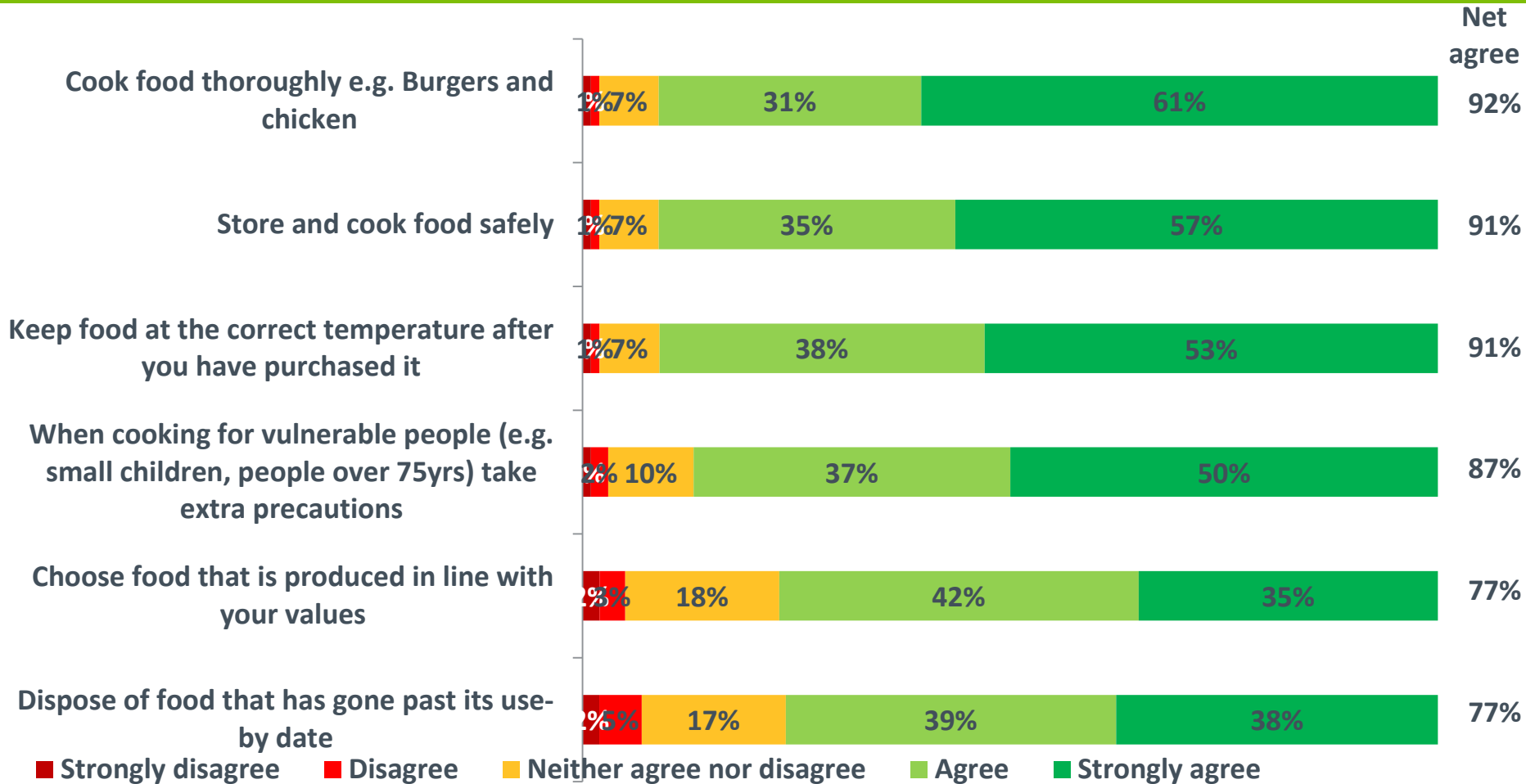
Other themes that emerged on what should be changed or what is missing from the FSA definition of responsibilities (less than 3% of mentions)



Themes with a total less than 3%

Q7b: Are there any aspects you feel are missing or should be changed?
Base 1995

People strongly agreed with all of the consumer responsibilities, especially cooking food thoroughly, storing and cooking food safely and keeping food at the correct temperature (all over 90% agreement)



Q8: The Food Standards Agency suggests that consumers have responsibilities in relation to food. How much do you agree with the idea that, as a consumer, you have the responsibility to:

Respondents came up with very few other responsibilities that consumers should have in relation to food

8% mentioned good food hygiene and cleanliness as their responsibility

Other responsibilities that consumers have in relation to food (open)

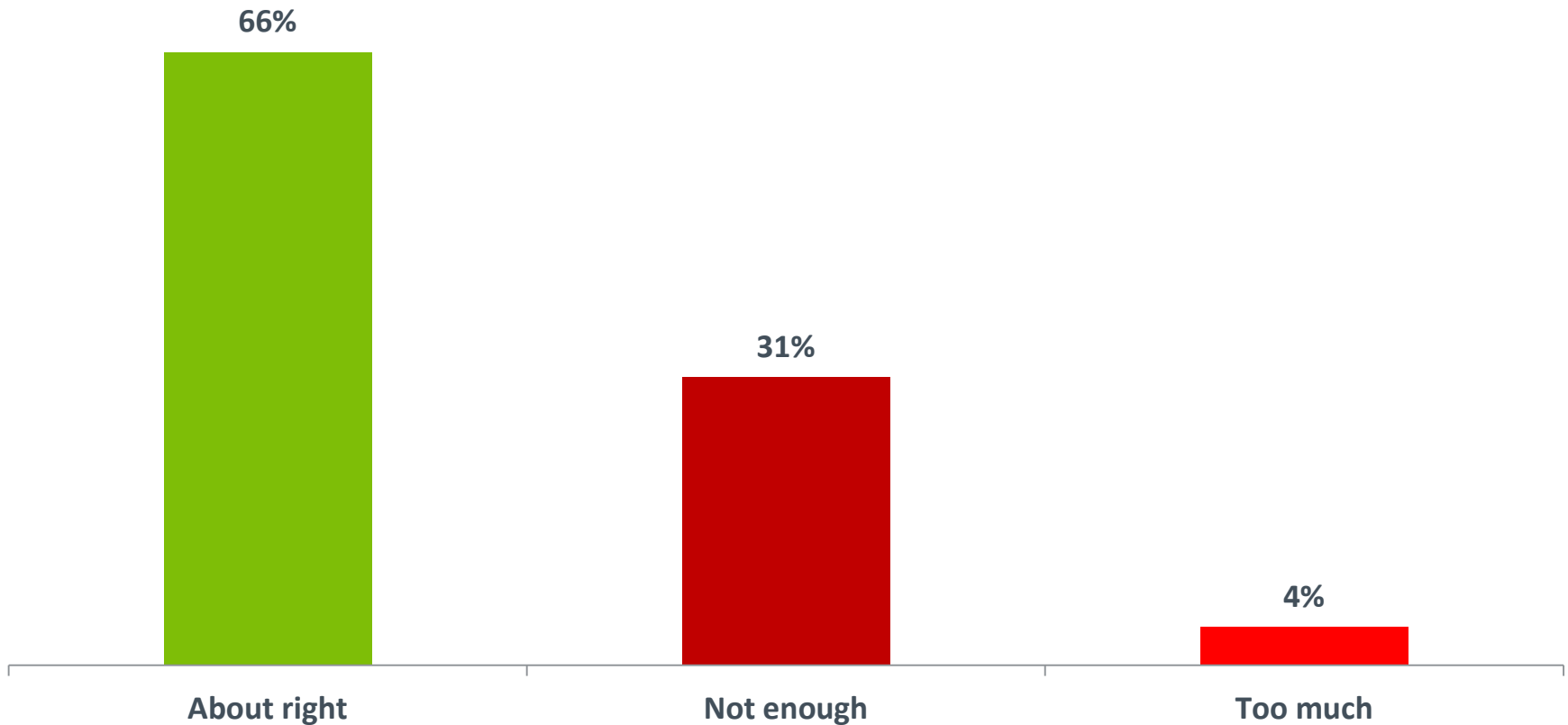


Only themes with a total above 5% are included

Two-thirds (66%) believed that the amount of information that is present on food labels is about right.

31% felt that there is not enough information on food labels

The amount of information on food labels is...



Q10: The Food Standards Agency suggests that consumers have the right to information to enable them to make food decisions. Do you think the amount of information on food labels is currently...?
Base 1995

Very few respondents gave answers on whether there was anything that does not currently appear on food labels that should be included or whether there was anything that should not be included? (open comments)

Should be included

“The exact origin of the food should be made clearer and more of a focus point on the packaging”

“Better information on allergens such as gluten and nuts ”

“Information should be easy to read as most information is in such small text it is often hard to read”

Based on themes with a total above 5%

Should not be included

“Misleading sell by dates”

“Far too much nutritional information”

“Technical names for additives”

“100 g nutritional info”

“Misleading claims about what benefits the food can give you”

Based on themes with a total above 1%

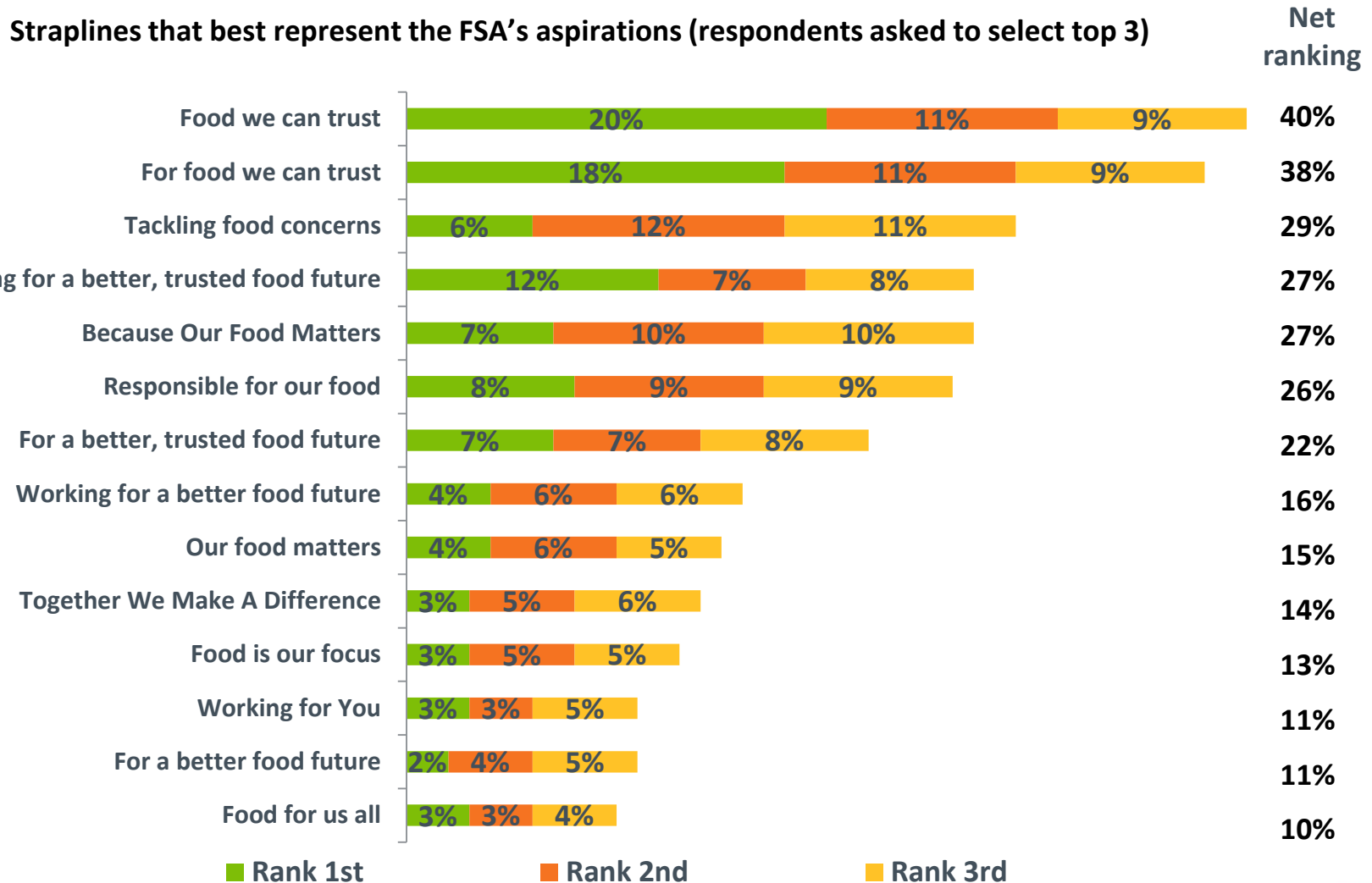
Q11: Is there anything that does not currently appear on food labels that you believe should be included?

Base 1995

Q12: Is there anything that is currently shown on food labels that you think should not be included?

Base 1995

Respondents believed that the straplines that best represent the FSA's aspirations are 'Food we can trust' (40%) and 'For food we can trust' (38%)



Q14: Below are a few potential straplines that the Food Standards Agency might use in its communications to describe their strategy and purpose. Please select the three that you believe best represent the Food Standards Agency's aspiration to:

Protect consumers, give people the information they need and deliver a better food future.

Base 1995

AHEAD OF WHAT'S NEXT.

For any questions please contact

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