

Quarterly public tracker - June 2009

Food Standards Agency

24th July 2009

Background

- ❑ The Food Standards Agency (FSA) places five questions on the TNS consumer face to face omnibus on a quarterly basis in order to monitor key Agency issues.
- ❑ The fieldwork period for this wave of the research was the 10th to the 14th June 2009. A representative sample of 2100 adults in the UK were interviewed.
- ❑ This is wave 42 of this tracking research. Tracking began in 2001.
- ❑ The questions tracked cover awareness of the FSA, attitude towards food safety issues, concern about specific food issues (spontaneous and prompted), confidence in all organisations, and in the Food Standards Agency specifically, with regard to food safety, and trust in the FSA.
- ❑ The following slides show top-line findings from in-house analysis. Statistically significant changes wave-on-wave and between key sub-groups are reported at the 95% confidence level. Full results are available on request in table format.
- ❑ To note:
 - ❑ Where the term 'total' is used to report the research findings (question 1a, 1b, 3a and 3b), it indicates **all** responses from parts 'a' and 'b' of each question combined.
 - ❑ Question 3a was amended slightly this wave, therefore a time series has not been indicated (please see 'additional notes about question 3', slides 23-24, for more detail on this).

Summary of results

Awareness of the FSA and Meat Hygiene Service

- ❑ Both spontaneous and total awareness of the Food Standards Agency fell slightly since March 2009 (79%-77% and 86%-84% respectively), however awareness has continued to show a gradual increase over time.
- ❑ This wave also saw a statistically significant decrease in reported awareness of the Meat Hygiene Service (from 31%-27%). This is lower than when tracking began, however awareness of the MHS has stayed relatively stable over time.

Confidence in food safety measures and trust in the FSA

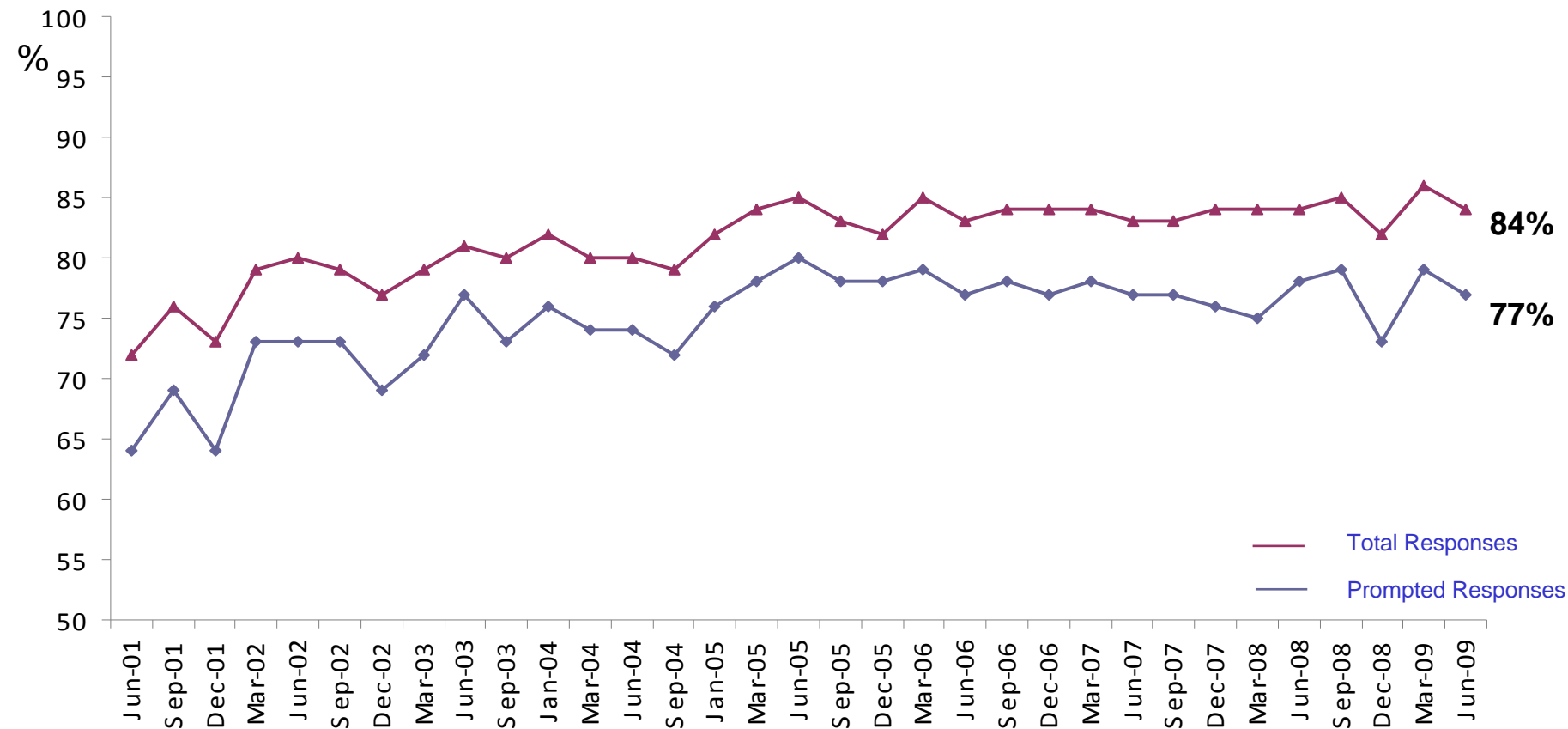
- ❑ Confidence in all organisations in protecting health with regards to food safety showed a statistically significant increase this wave, from 56% to 59%. Confidence in the FSA specifically also showed a statistically significant increase this wave (62%-65%), and is at its highest since tracking began.
- ❑ Trust in the FSA was at a similar level to previous waves of the tracker: half of respondents rated the Agency as an organisation they could trust. These findings are similar to those of previous waves of the Tracker but lower than findings of the Consumer Attitudes Survey (last carried out in 2007; see Additional Notes, slide 22, about this data).

Concern about food safety issues

- ❑ Concern about food safety issues continued to fall this wave (from 64% to 61%). Concern about food safety issues is now at the lowest since tracking began.
- ❑ The main issues of total concern during this wave were food poisoning (47%), the amount of fat, salt, sugar and saturated fat in food (41%, 40%, 36% and 36% respectively). Food prices and the conditions in which animals are raised were also areas for concern (both at 33%).
- ❑ However, it should be noted that the format for this question was reviewed, therefore results may not be comparable to previous waves (see slides 15-16 and 23-24 for further detail on this).

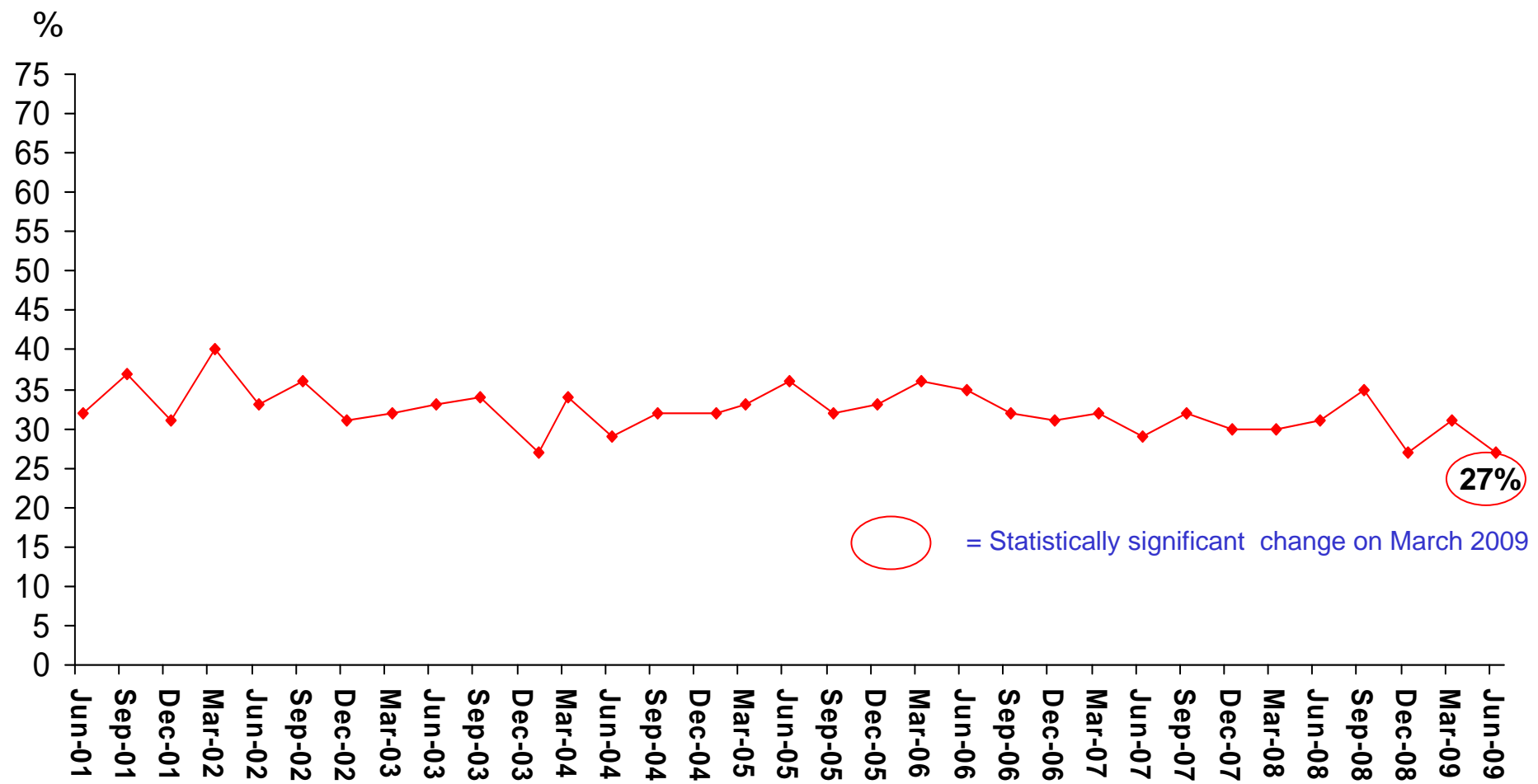
Section 1: Awareness of the Food Standards Agency and the Meat Hygiene Service

Both prompted and total awareness of the Food Standards Agency fell slightly from March 2009 (79%-77% and 86%-84% respectively), however there has been a steady and gradual increase in awareness since tracking began in 2001.



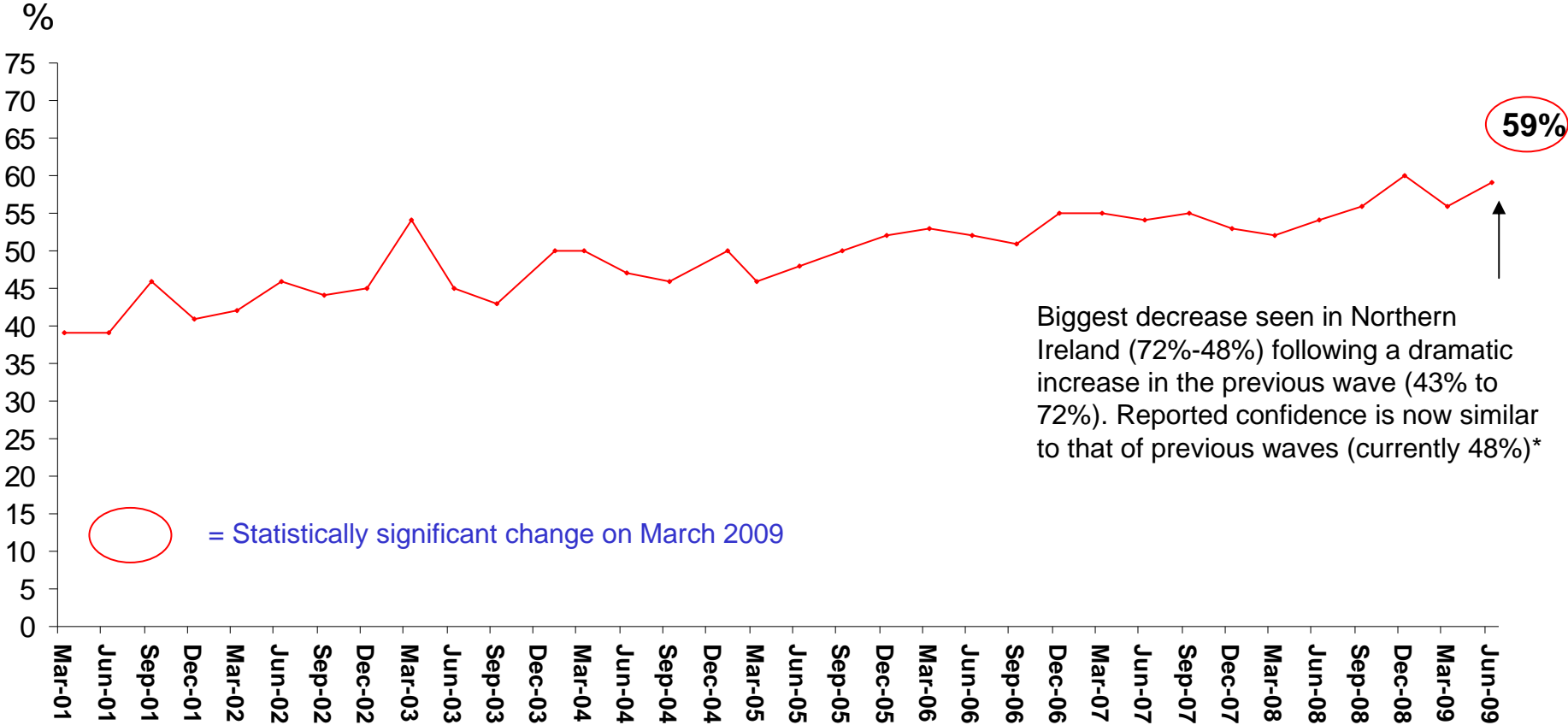
Q1a. Which of the following, if any, have you heard of?; Q1b. Can I just check, have you heard of the Food Standards Agency? Base : All respondents

Awareness of the Meat Hygiene Service indicated a statistically significantly decrease this wave, from 31% to 27%. Although awareness has stayed relatively stable over time, it is presently lower than when tracking began in 2001.



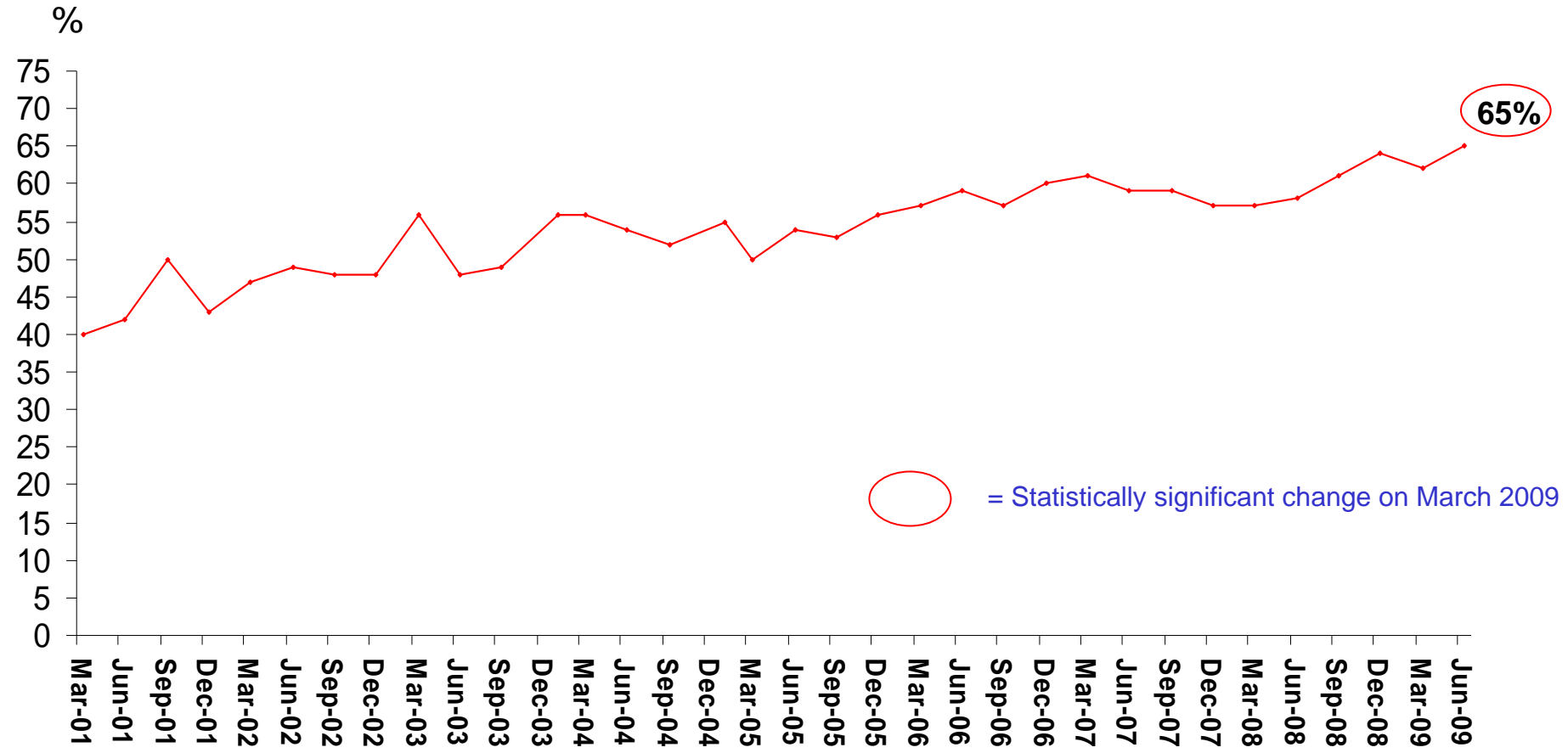
Section 2: Confidence in food safety measures and trust in the FSA

Confidence in the food safety measures of **all** organisations showed a statistically significant increase this wave from 56% to 59%.



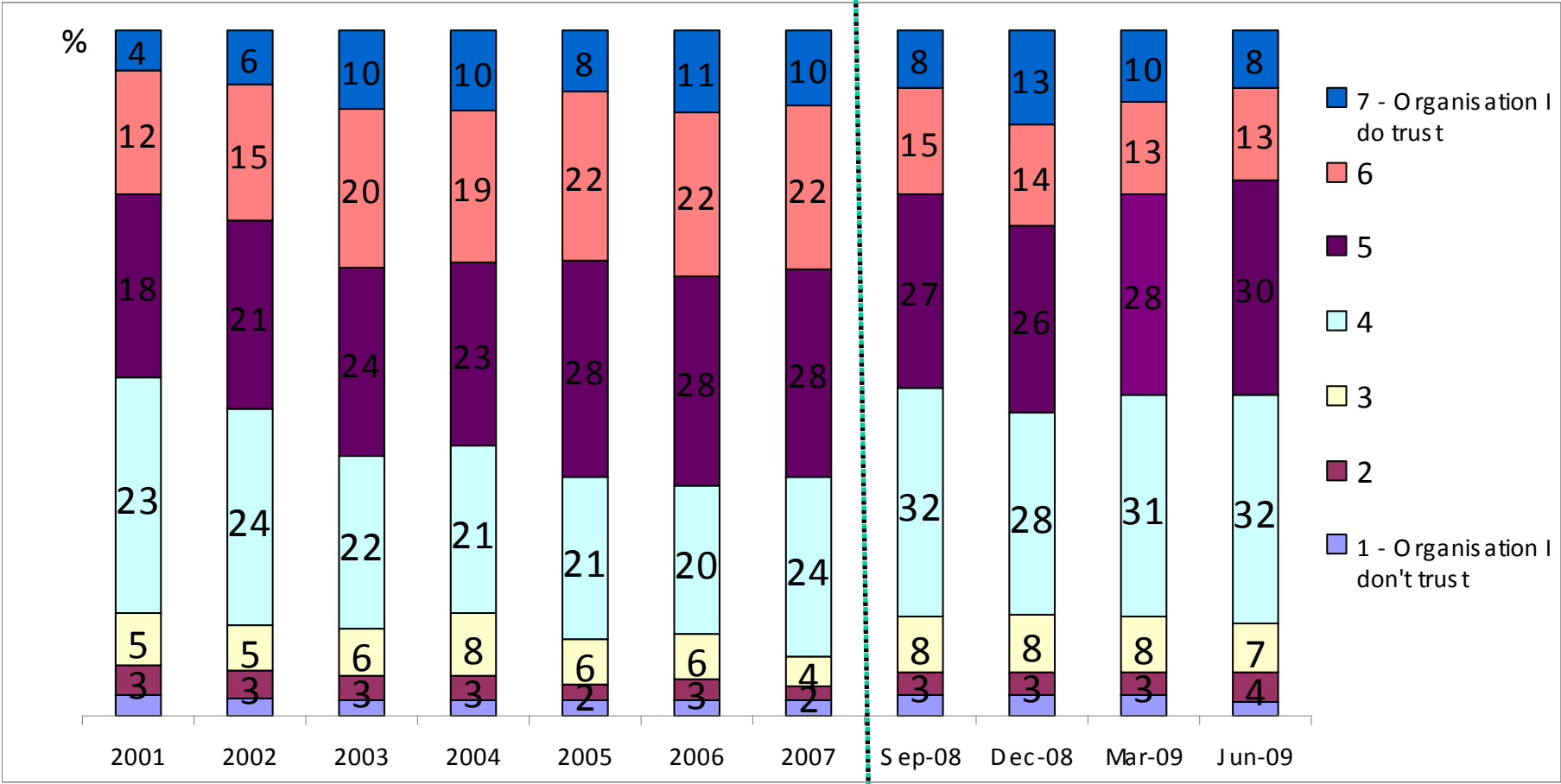
* It should be noted that the sample size for Northern Ireland is small.

Confidence in the role played by the Food Standards Agency in protecting health has shown a statistically significant increase compared to the March 2009 wave (from 62% to 65%). Confidence in the Food Standards Agency has gradually increased over time and is currently at its highest since tracking began.



Half of respondents rated the Agency as an organisation they trust. This figure continues to remain stable when compared to previous waves where this question has been asked in the Tracker, but is slightly lower than seen in the Consumer Attitudes Survey (CAS).

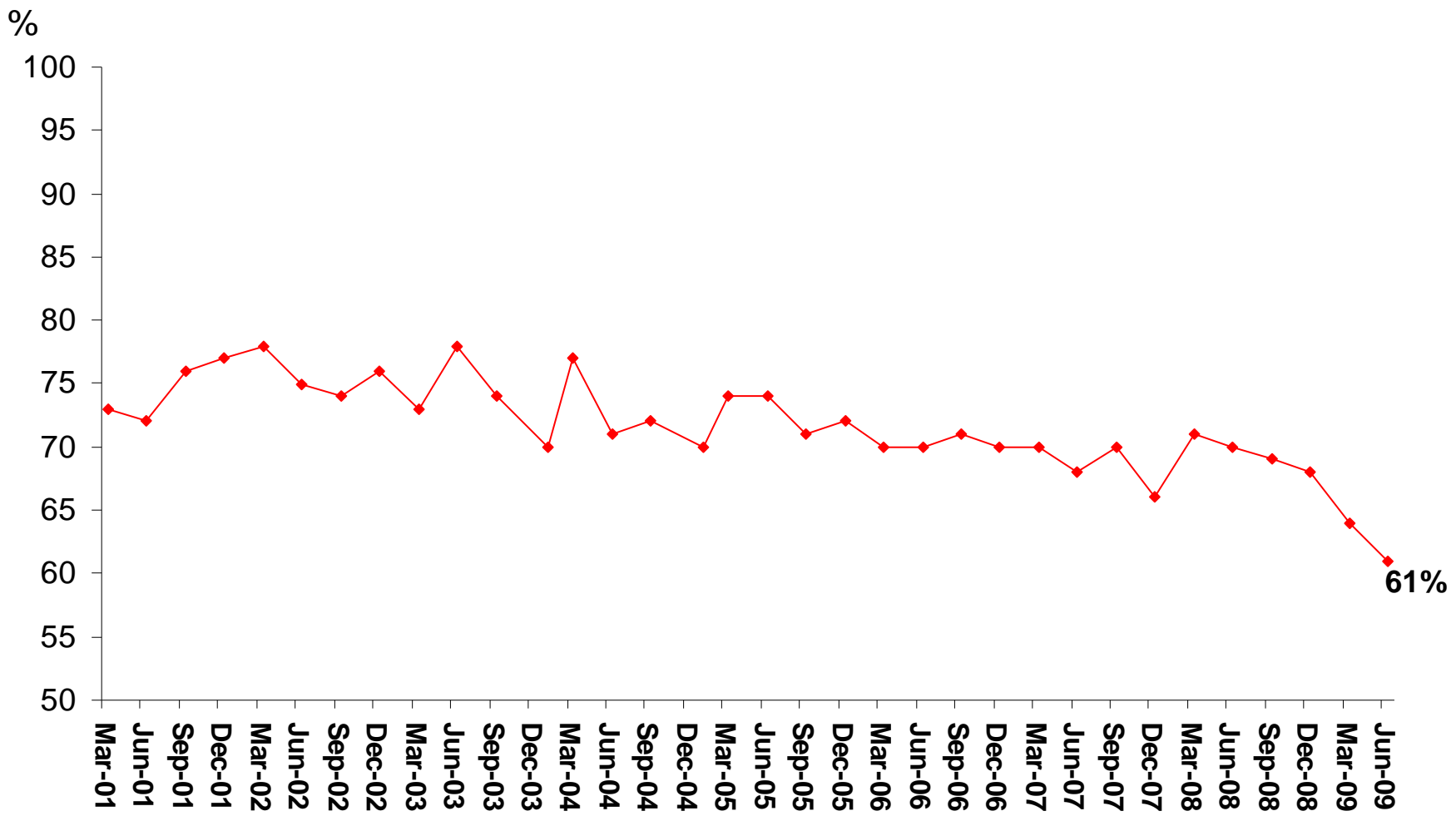
% trust (5, 6 or 7) 44% 50% 54% 52% 58% 61% 60% 50% 53% 51% 51%



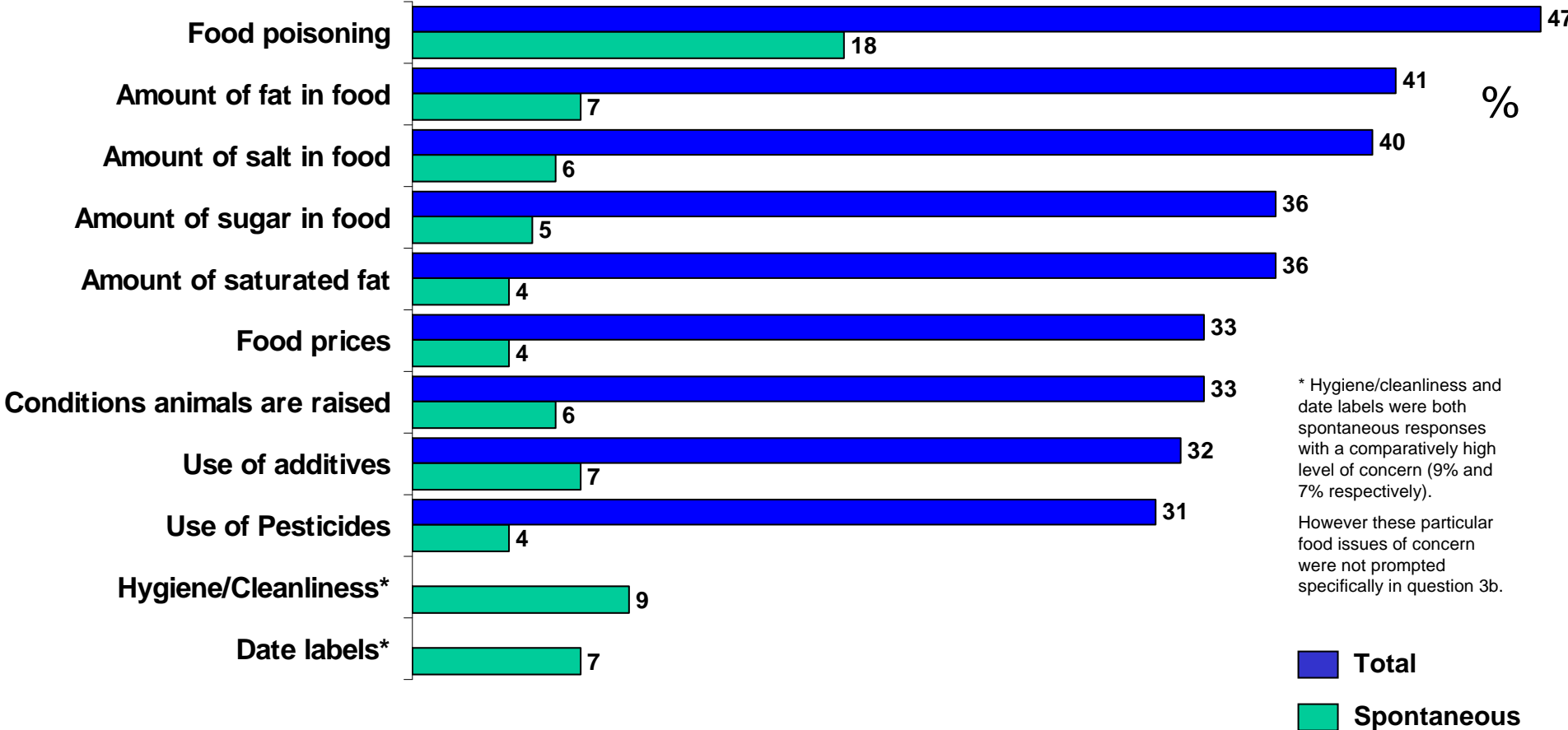
NB: Asked previously in CAS. Different sample size and question order so answers not directly comparable. Please see 'Additional Notes' slide for more information (final slide).

Section 3: Concern about food issues

Concern about food safety issues continued to fall this wave, from 64% to 61%, continuing a gradual decrease from the previous five waves. Concern about food safety issues is now the lowest it has been since tracking began in 2001.

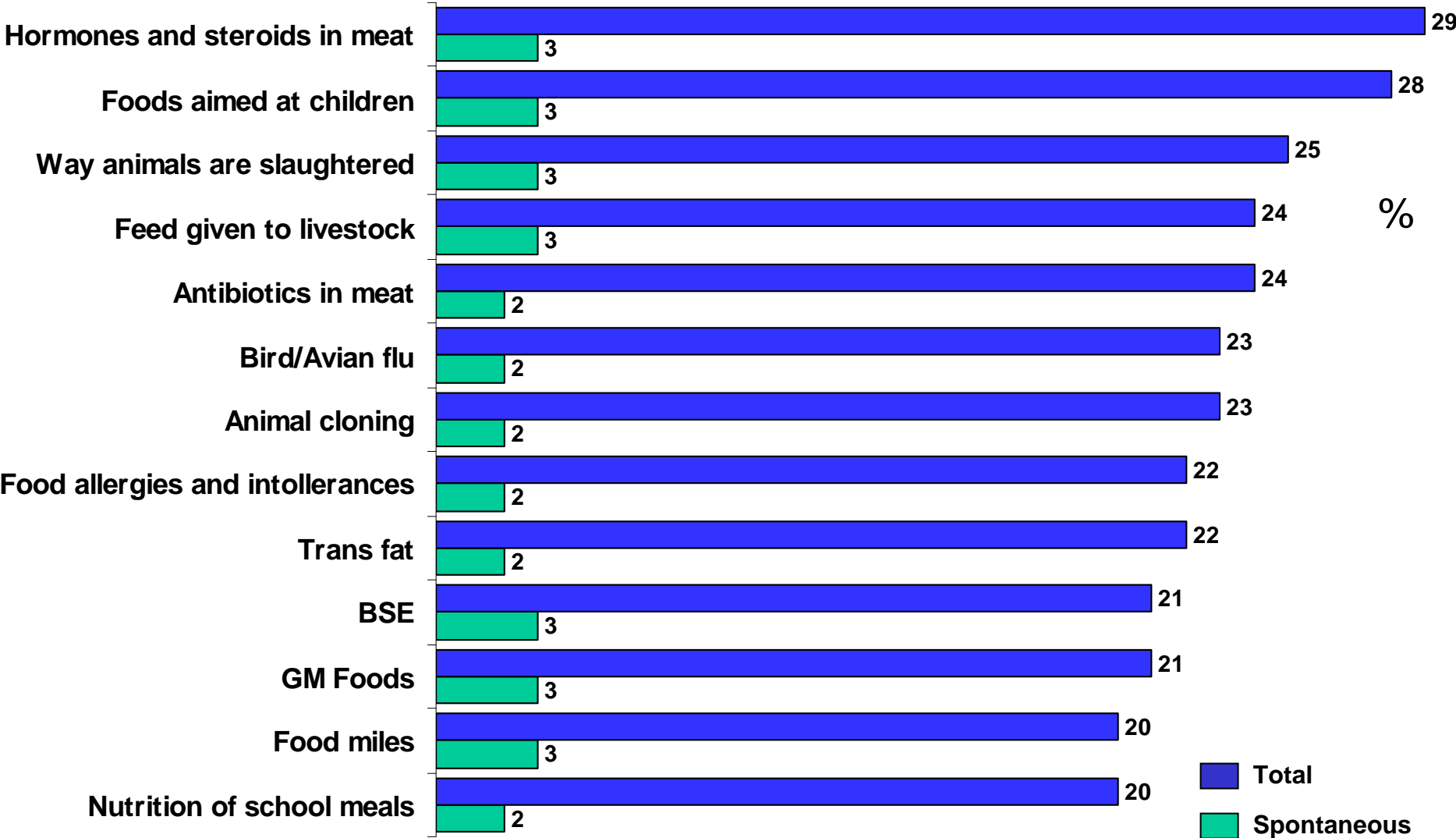


The main food issues of total concern for respondents were food poisoning (47%), the amount of fat (41%), salt (40%), sugar (36%), and saturated fat (36%). Other issues of concern were food prices and the conditions in which animals are raised (both at 33%).



NB: Please see slides 15 and 16 for further detail on these results.

Other food issues of concern.



NB: Please see slides 15 and 16 for further detail on these results.

Concern about food safety issues

□ Total concern for the majority of food safety issues fell significantly this wave, which may be due to question format (table continued on next page, please see ‘additional notes about question 3’, slides 23-24, for further detail):

<u>Food Safety Issue</u>	<u>Spontaneous Response</u>		<u>Total Response</u>	
	Previous Wave (n=1860)	Present Wave (used pre-codes, n=912)	Previous Wave	Present Wave
Food poisoning	21%	26%*	52%	47%*
Amount of fat in food	11%	10%	45%	41%*
Amount of salt in food	12%	9%*	47%	40%*
Amount of sugar in food	10%	8%	43%	36%*
Amount of saturated fat in food	8%	7%	41%	36%*
Food prices	8%	6%	41%	33%*
Conditions animals are raised	8%	7%	36%	33%*
Use of additives	10%	8%	37%	32%*
Use of pesticides	7%	6%	34%	31%*
Hormones/steroids in meat	5%	5%	33%	29%*
Foods aimed at children	4%	5%	32%	28%*
Way animals are slaughtered	5%	5%	29%	25%*

* shows a significant difference when compared to the previous wave

Concern about food safety issues

Table continued:

<u>Food Safety Issue</u>	<u>Spontaneous Response</u>		<u>Total Response</u>	
	Previous Wave (n=1860)	Present Wave (used pre-codes, n=912)	Previous Wave	Present Wave
Feed given to livestock	5%	6%	28%	24%*
Antibiotics in meat	5%	4%	28%	24%*
Bird/avian flu	5%	5%	29%	23%*
BSE	4%	4%	26%	21%*
GM foods	6%	4%	26%	21%*

- It should be noted that question 3a was reviewed during this wave, therefore the time series graphs have not been indicated. Significantly less concern for the majority of food issues was reported when responses were open rather than pre-coded**. Please see ‘additional notes about question 3’ (slides 23-24) for more detail.
- When comparing the half of respondents whose answers were coded as per previous waves, food poisoning increased significantly (from 21% to 26%) and concern over the amount of salt in food has decreased significantly (from 12% to 9%). There were no significant changes across other food issues of concern.
- Despite question 3 being under review this wave, it should be observed that the food safety issues of most concern are similar to previous waves (for example, as per previous waves, food poisoning, the amount of salt/sugar/fat/saturated fat, use of additives, use of pesticides and conditions in which animals are raised are of higher concern than other issues).


* shows a significant difference when compared to previous wave
 ** pre-coding is where the interviewer places respondents' answers into a set of pre-defined codes

Appendix: Sub group differences

Total awareness of Food Standards Agency – June 2009

Differences in Key Subgroups


		%
TOTAL		84
Sex	Male	85
	Female	83
Age	16-25	78
	26-35	83
	36-49	88
	50-65	92
	66+	73
Social class	AB	92
	C1C2	86
	DE	73
Working status	Working full time	88
	Working part time	91
	Other	78
Marital status	Married	88
	Single	79
	Separated/widowed	77
Principal Shopper	Yes	84
	No	82

 = Statistically significantly higher compared to at least one other sub-group within category

Q1a. Which of the following, if any, have you heard of?; Q1b. Can I just check, have you heard of the Food Standards Agency?
 Base: All respondents


Concern about food safety issues (very/quite concerned) – June 09. Differences in Key Subgroups

		%
TOTAL		61
Age	16-25	57
	26-35	58
	36-49	64
	50-65	66
	66+	57
Marital Status	Married	64
	Single	58
	Separated/widowed	58
Working status	Working full time	61
	Working part time	67
	Other	60
Principle Shopper	Yes	63
	No	57

 = Statistically significantly higher compared to at least one other subgroup within category


Confidence in measures taken by all organisations (very/fairly confident) – June 09. Differences in Key Subgroups

		%
TOTAL		59
Age	16-25	63
	26-35	60
	36-49	59
	50-65	56
	66+	59

 = Statistically significantly higher compared to at least one other sub-group within category

Confidence in Food Standards Agency (very/fairly confident) – June 09. Differences in Key Subgroups

		%
TOTAL		65
Sex	Male	67
	Female	63
Age	16-25	73
	26-35	67
	36-49	67
	50-65	58
	66+	62
Social Class	AB	60
	C1C2	68
	DE	63

 = Statistically significantly higher compared to at least one other sub-group within category

Additional notes about the data

- ❑ Fieldwork is conducted every three months, however the frequency has changed over the history of the Tracker:
 - ❑ April 01 – December 01: research was conducted every three months
 - ❑ October 01 – September 02: research was conducted every month
 - ❑ December 02 – present: research has been conducted every three months

- ❑ From April 01 to June 06 research was conducted among a nationally representative sample of adults aged 16+ in Great Britain. From September 2006 the sample was extended to be representative of the United Kingdom.

- ❑ An additional question was asked during the September 2008, December 2008 and March 2009 waves, and again this wave, to measure trust in the FSA. This question has previously been asked in the FSA annual Consumer Attitudes Survey (CAS) which is being reviewed and so has not been run in 2009. Due to differences in question wording and sampling, results from the Tracker are not directly comparable to the CAS.

Additional notes about question 3

- ❑ It should be noted that question 3a was reviewed during this wave. Half of respondents' answers were coded as per the usual pre-codes* used in previous waves, and half of respondents' answers were left completely open and therefore coded accordingly. This was done in order to verify the appropriateness of the pre-codes, with the possibility to amend them for future waves (please see next slide for a more detailed breakdown of this).
- ❑ Due to this amendment, there were often less responses to code into the original pre-codes as newer codes were created from the open responses that more closely match respondent's answers. This is likely to explain the significant decrease amongst many of the food safety issues of concern in this wave.
- ❑ As a result of this, it was not appropriate to report all of the time series graphs as per previous waves. Due to these findings, we will consider amending the original pre-codes to make them more relevant and appropriate in order to gain the most accurate figures from the research.
- ❑ One final point to note is that spontaneous responses in this wave comprised only those who had some level of concern about food safety issues (therefore respondents who were not at all concerned about food safety issues were not asked for spontaneous issues of concern). However, all respondents were prompted with food safety issues of concern to form the total responses listed in the table on slides 15/16 (question 3b).

* pre-coding is where the interviewer places respondents' answers into a set of pre-defined codes

Additional notes about question 3

<u>Food Safety Issue</u>	<u>Spontaneous Responses</u>	
	Present Wave (used pre-codes)	Present Wave (open response)
Food poisoning	26%	10% •
Amount of fat in food	10%	3% •
Amount of salt in food	9%	2% •
Amount of sugar in food	8%	2% •
Amount of saturated fat in food	7%	Negligible •
Food prices	6%	1% •
Conditions animals are raised	7%	4% •
Use of additives	8%	5% •
Use of pesticides	6%	2% •
Hormones/steroids in meat	5%	Negligible •
Foods aimed at children	5%	1% •
Way animals are slaughtered	5%	1% •
Feed given to livestock	6%	Negligible •
Antibiotics in meat	4%	Negligible •
Bird/avian flu	5%	Negligible •
BSE	4%	1% •
GM foods	4%	2%

❑ Reported concern was significantly lower in the majority of food concerns when the responses were open rather than pre-coded, indicating that interviewer coding had a significant impact on the results but also highlighting the relevance of new codes, for example, hygiene/cleanliness, date labels.

• shows a significant difference between open responses and the pre-codes for this wave

Q3a. What food issues, if any, are you concerned about? Base: All respondents who are concerned about food safety issues; Q3b. Are you concerned about any of the following food issues? Base: All respondents (Spontaneous answers over 4%)