

Wave 5: Chapter 2 Concerns around food

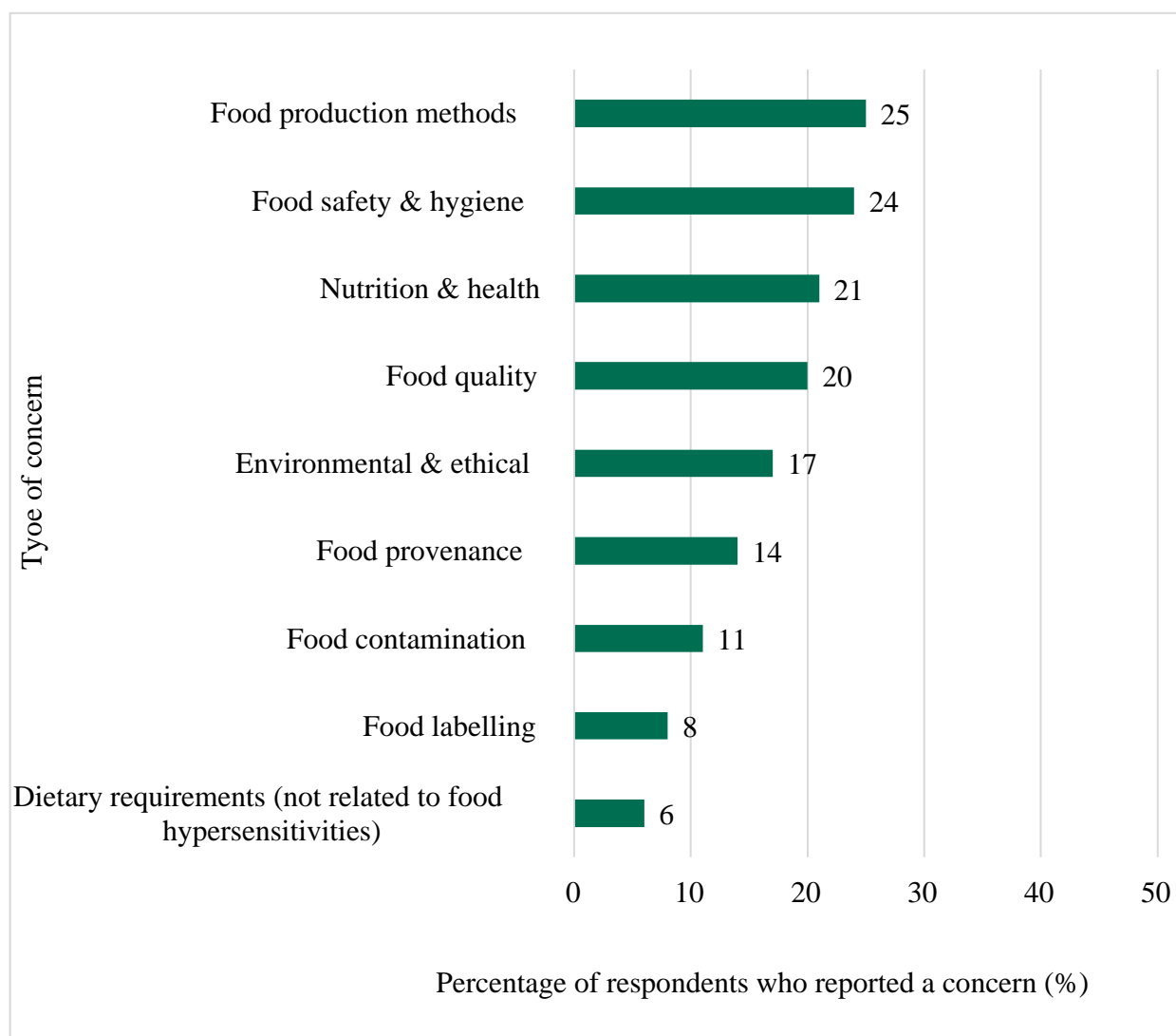
Introduction

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 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 (80%) had no concerns about the food they eat, and 20% of respondents reported that they had a concern ([footnote 1](#)).

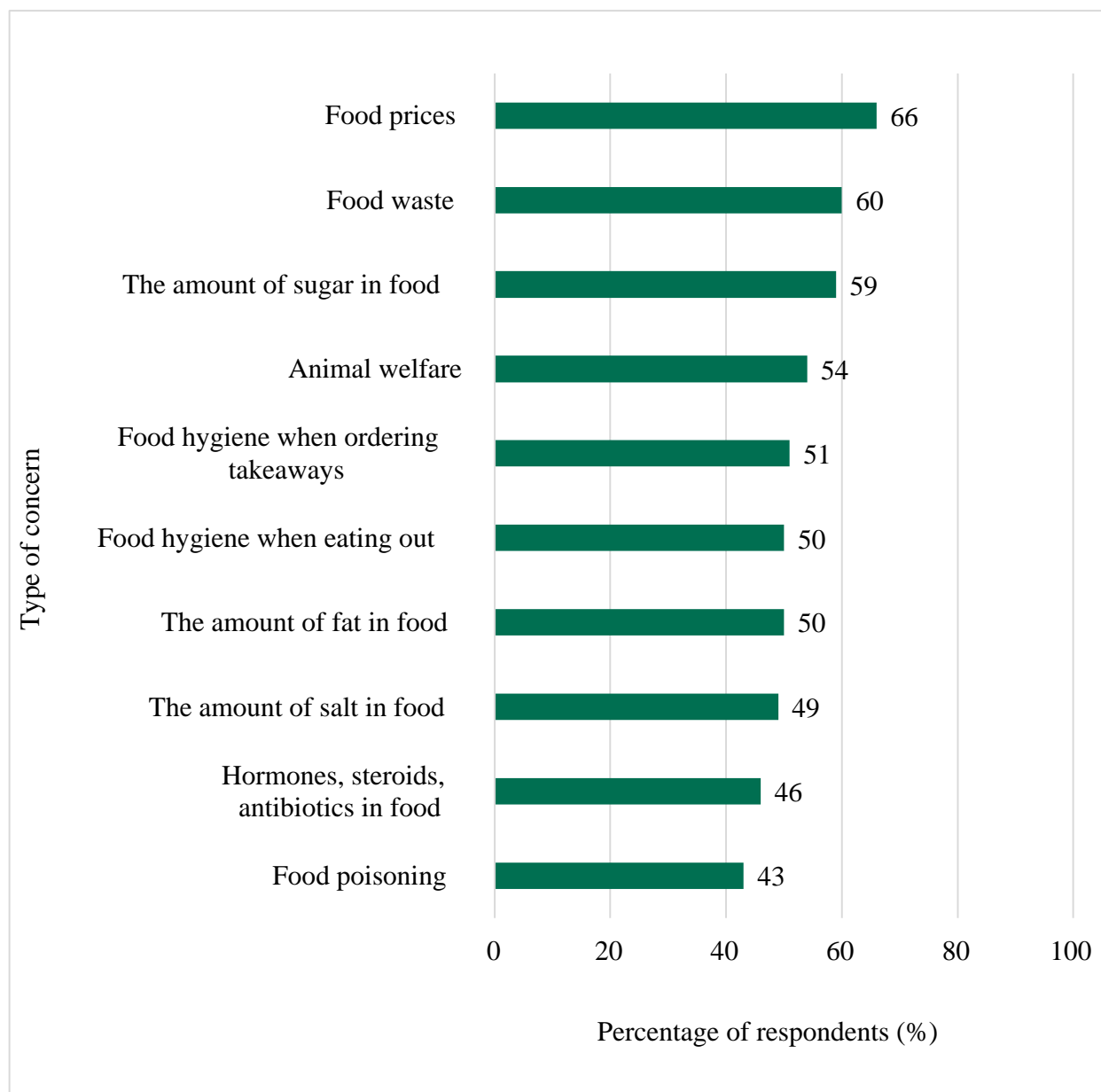
Figure 2. Most common spontaneously expressed food-related concerns



Source: Food and You 2 Wave 5

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 (25%), which included the use of additives (such as preservatives and colouring) in food products (11%), the use of pesticides / fertiliser to grow food (10%) and how food has been produced / processed (5%). The second most common concern related to food safety and hygiene (24%), which included food being cooked / prepared properly (10%) and the safety of food (5%) (Figure 2) ([footnote 2](#)).

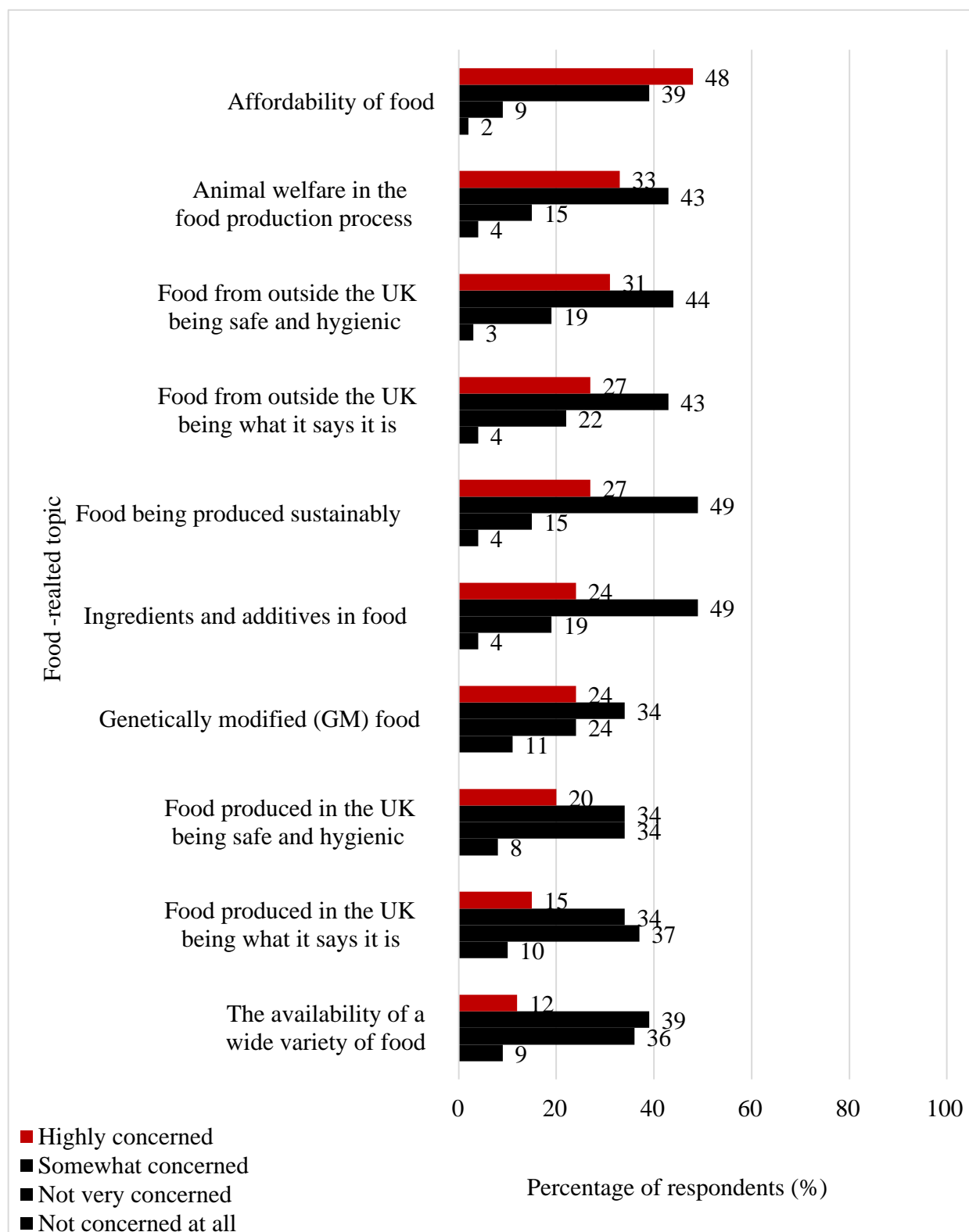
Figure 3. Ten most common prompted food-related concerns



Source: Food and You 2 Wave 5

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options. The most common concerns related to food prices (66%), food waste (60%), the amount of sugar in food (59%) and animal welfare (54%). Around half of respondents were concerned about food hygiene when ordering takeaways (51%), food hygiene when eating out (50%), the amount of fat in food (50%) and the amount of salt in food (49%) (Figure 3) [\(footnote 3\)](#).

Figure 4. Level of concern about food-related topics



Source: Food and You 2 Wave 5

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 (48%), animal welfare in the food production process (33%) and food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic (31%) (Figure 4) ([footnote 4](#)).

The reported level of concern about the affordability of food varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- household size: households with 5 people or more (57%) were more likely to report that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food compared to smaller households (for example, 43% of 1 person households)
- annual household income: respondents with a lower income were more likely to report that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food compared to households with a higher income. For example, 54% of those with an income below £19,000 reported that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food compared to 37% of those with an income of more than £96,000
- region (England) ([footnote 5](#)): levels of concern about the affordability of food varied by region in England. For example, respondents who lived in the North-East of England (59%) and East Midlands (54%) were more likely to report that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food compared to those who lived in the West Midlands (43%) and East of England (43%)
- food security: respondents with very low food security (77%) were more likely to report that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food than those with low (66%) or marginal (64%) food security. Those with high food security were least likely to report that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food (39%)
- ethnic group: Asian or Asian British respondents (57%) were more likely to report very high levels of concern about the affordability of food than white respondents (47%).

1. Question: Do you have any concerns about the food you eat? Responses: Yes, No.
Base= 6770, all respondents.
2. Question: What are your concerns about the food you eat? Responses: [Open text].
Base= 1346, 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= 4041, 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 = 4041, all online respondents. Please note: some question wording was modified for respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

5. Regional differences were only considered if England due to the low base size in Wales and Northern Ireland.