

Consumer Insights Tracker: Chapter 8

Perceptions of the food supply chain and regulation

Confidence in the food supply chain

In March 2023, 63% of participants felt 'confident' in the food supply chain (the supply chain is all the processes involved in bringing food to the table), a significant decline from 69% in March 2022 and since tracking began in November 2021 (69%). This measure has declined gradually between March 2022 and May 2022, and has since remained broadly stable (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Participants who reported being 'very' or 'fairly' confident in the food supply chain (November 2021 – March 2023)

Data sources: Consumer Insights Tracker March 2022- March 2023, Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, Fieldwork dates and sample sizes available in Annex 2.

Participants are also asked about their confidence in the food supply chain to ensure:

- that food is safe to eat
- there is enough food available for people to eat
- there are affordable food options for everyone
- that food is of a high quality

In March 2023, 78% of people were confident that those involved in the food supply chain in the UK ensure that food is safe to eat, in line with March 2022 (79%).

However, between March 2022 and March 2023, there have been significant declines in participant confidence in the food supply chain to ensure:

- there is enough food available for people to eat (63% in March 2023 vs. 70% in March 2022).
- there are affordable food options for everyone (49% in March 2023 vs. 56% in March 2022)
- that food is of a high quality (70% in March 2023 vs. 75% in March 2022).

Figure 33: Participants who reported being ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ confident in the food supply chain with regards to food affordability and food availability (March 2022 – March 2023)

Data sources: Consumer Insights Tracker March 2022- March 2023, Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, Fieldwork dates and sample sizes available in Annex 2.

Figure 34: Participants who reported being ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ confident in the food supply chain with regards to food safety and quality (March 2022 – March 2023)

Data sources: Consumer Insights Tracker March 2022 - March 2023, Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75. Fieldwork dates and sample sizes available in Annex 2.

Perceptions of the FSA

Participants are asked about their confidence in the FSA. Findings from March 2023 show that most participants felt confident that the FSA:

- can be relied upon to protect the public from food related risks (72%)
- is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks (68%)
- takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified (76%)

Although changes have been gradual, there has been a significant decline since March 2022 in confidence that the FSA can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (75% in March 2022 to 72% in March 2023) (Figure 35). The proportion of participants in March 2023 reporting that they are confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public has remained stable over time and March 2023 is in line with March 2022. This is also the case for the proportion of participants who report being confident that the FSA will take appropriate action.

Figure 35: Participants who reported being ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ confident in the FSA with regards to food related risks (March 2022 – March 2023)

Data sources: Consumer Insights Tracker November 2021- March 2023, Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, Fieldwork dates and sample sizes available in Annex 2.

Participants are also asked how much they trust the FSA to do its job (that is, to 'make sure that food is safe and what it says it is'). Since March 2022, there has been a gradual and significant decline in the proportion of participants stating they trust the FSA, from 63% in March 2022 to 59% in March 2023. However, there have been no significant changes in the proportion of participants saying that they 'distrust' the FSA (Figure 36).

Figure 36: Participants who trust/distrust the FSA to 'make sure food is safe and is what it says it is' (March 2022 – March 2023)

Data sources: Consumer Insights Tracker November 2021- March 2023, Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75. Fieldwork dates and sample sizes available in Annex 2 and 3.