

Food and You 2 trends: 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. 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 between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Common concerns

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options. Between Wave 1 and Wave 8 the most common concerns have varied.

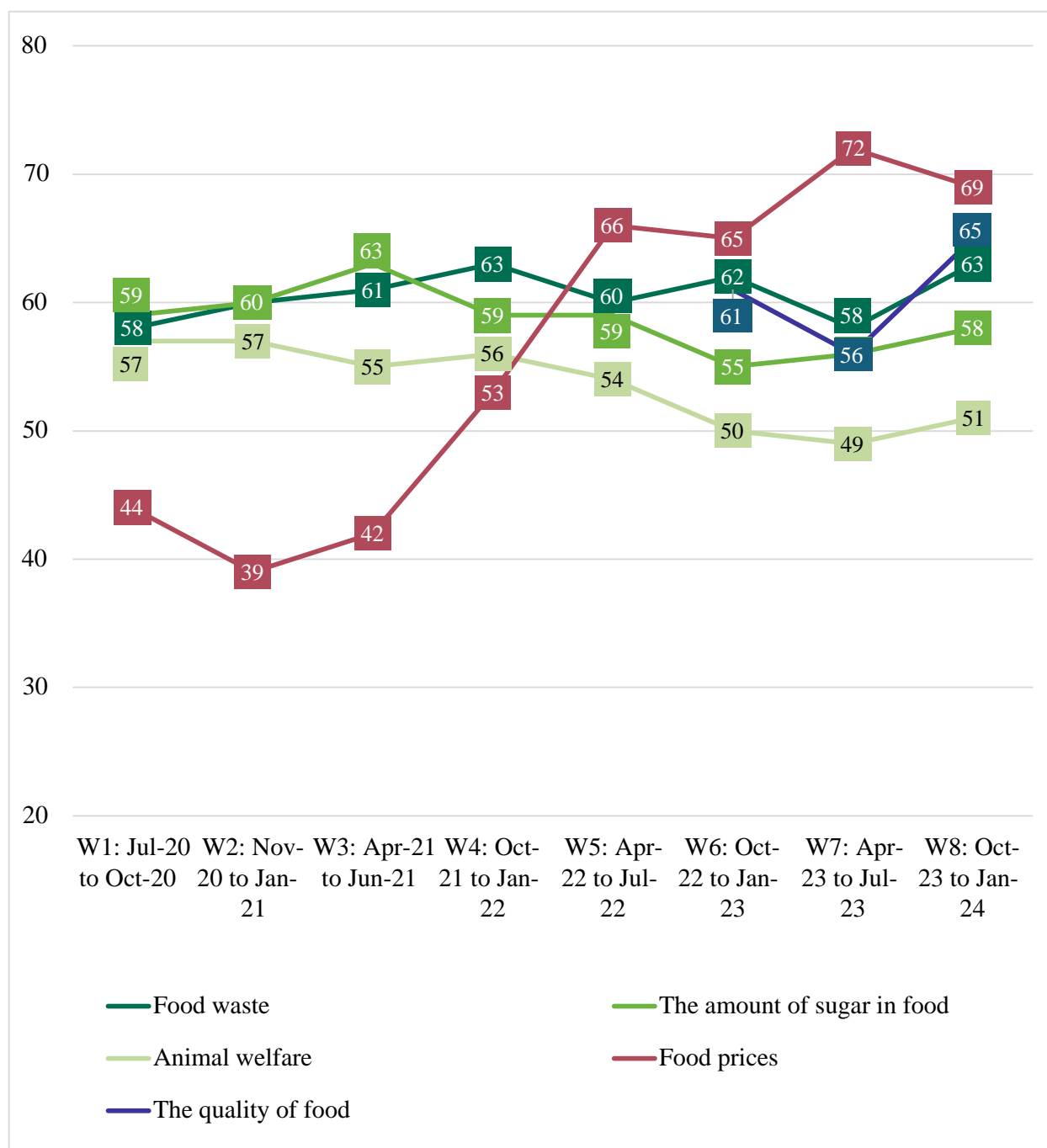
Between Wave 1 and Wave 4 the most common concerns were food waste (58%-61%), the amount of sugar in food (59%-60%) and animal welfare (55%-57%). Since Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022), there has been a notable increase in the percentage of respondents concerned around food prices, with this becoming the most prevalent concern since Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022) ([footnote 1](#)).

Over the past four waves (Waves 5-8), the top concerns for consumers have consistently been food prices (65%-68%), food waste (58%-63%) and the quality of food (56%-61%) ([footnote 2](#)) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Prompted food-related concerns (top 3 concerns between waves 1-4 and 5-8).

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Wave	Food waste (%)	The amount of sugar in food (%)	Animal welfare (%)	Food prices (%)	The quality of food (%)
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	58	59	57	44	-
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	60	60	57	39	-
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	61	63	55	42	-
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	63	59	56	53	-
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	60	59	54	66	-
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	62	55	50	65	61
W7: Apr-23 to Jul-23	58	56	49	72	56
W8: Oct-23 to Jan-24	63	58	51	69	65

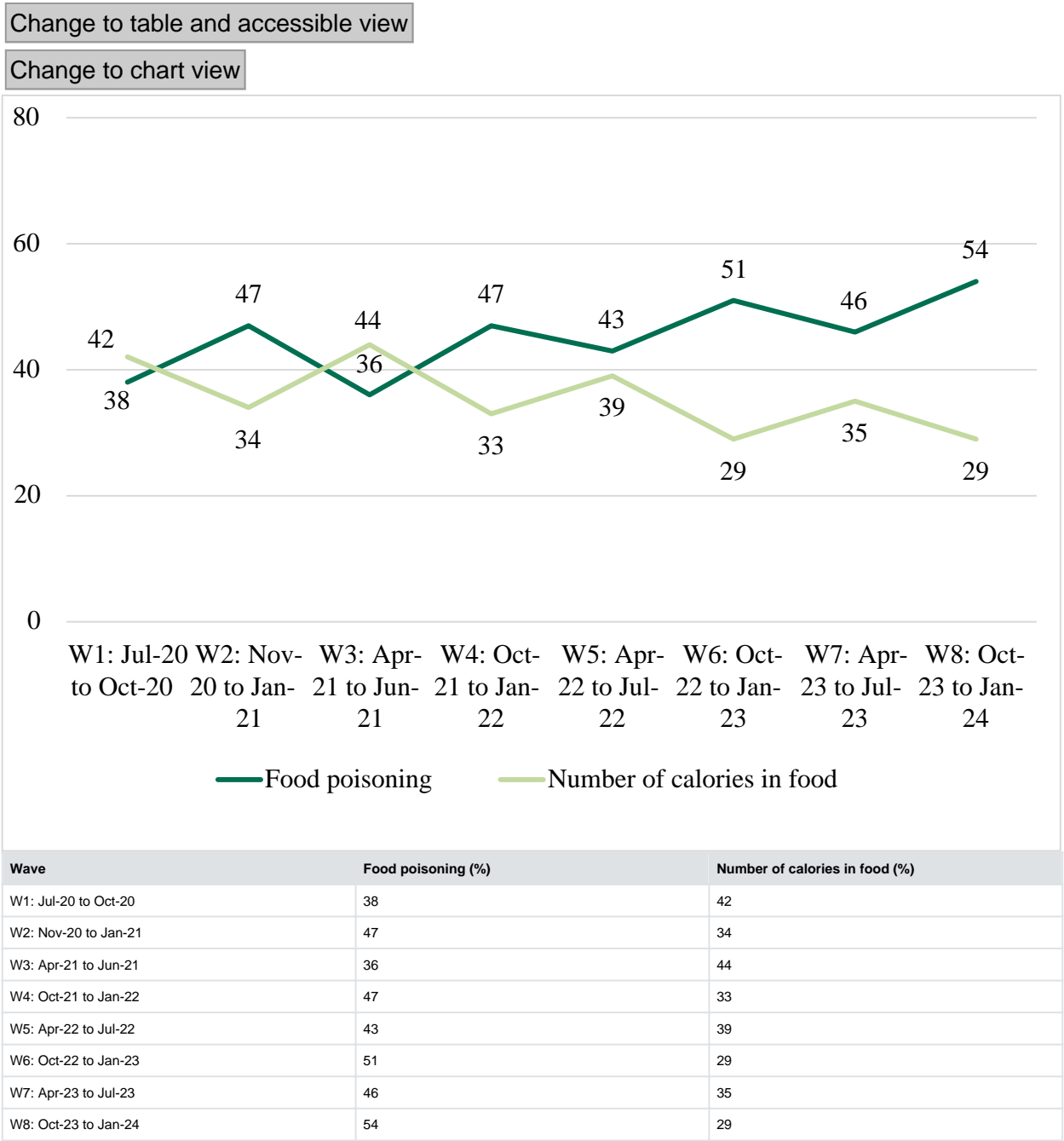
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Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

Other notable changes in consumer concerns between Wave 1 and Wave 8 include an increase in the percentage of respondents concerned about food poisoning (from 38% in Wave 1 to 54% in Wave 8), whilst the percentage of respondents concerned about the amount of calories in food has notably declined (from 42% in Wave 1 to 29% in Wave 8) (Figure 8). Concern about other food-related issues has remained broadly stable (data for other concerns can be found in the accompanying data tables).

Figure 8: Notable changes in consumer concerns over time (food poisoning and number of calories in food)



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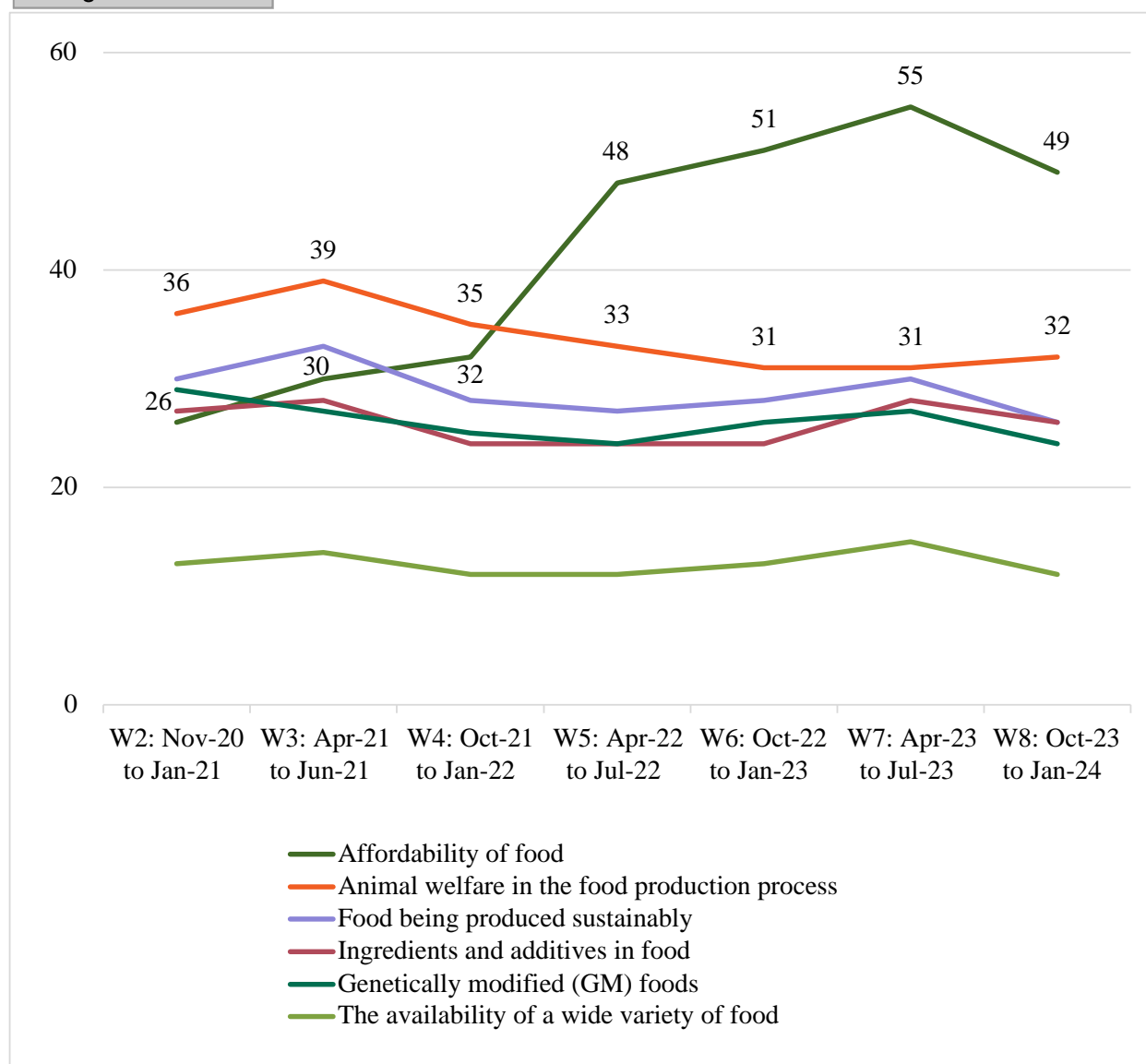
From Wave 2, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were concerned about several specific food-related issues [\(footnote 3\)](#).

The percentage of respondents who reported feeling highly concerned about the affordability of food has notably increased over time (from 26% in Wave 2 to 49% in Wave 8). There has also been a slight decline in the percentage of respondents highly concerned about animal welfare (from a peak of 39% in Wave 3, to 32% in Wave 8**). Concerns about the availability of food, food being produced sustainably, ingredients and additives in food, genetically modified (GM) foods, and the availability of a wide variety of food have remained broadly stable (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Those who reported feeling “highly concerned” about a range of food topics

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Wave	Affordability of food (%)	Animal welfare in the food production process (%)	Food being produced sustainably (%)	Ingredients and additives in food (%)	Genetically modified (GM) foods (%)	The availability of a wide variety of food (%)
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	26	36	30	27	29	13
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	30	39	33	28	27	14
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	32	35	28	24	25	12
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	48	33	27	24	24	12
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	51	31	28	24	26	13
W7: Apr-23 to Jul-23	55	31	30	28	27	15
W8: Oct-23 to Jan-24	49	32	26	26	24	12

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Food and You 2: Wave 2-8 [\(footnote 4\)](#)

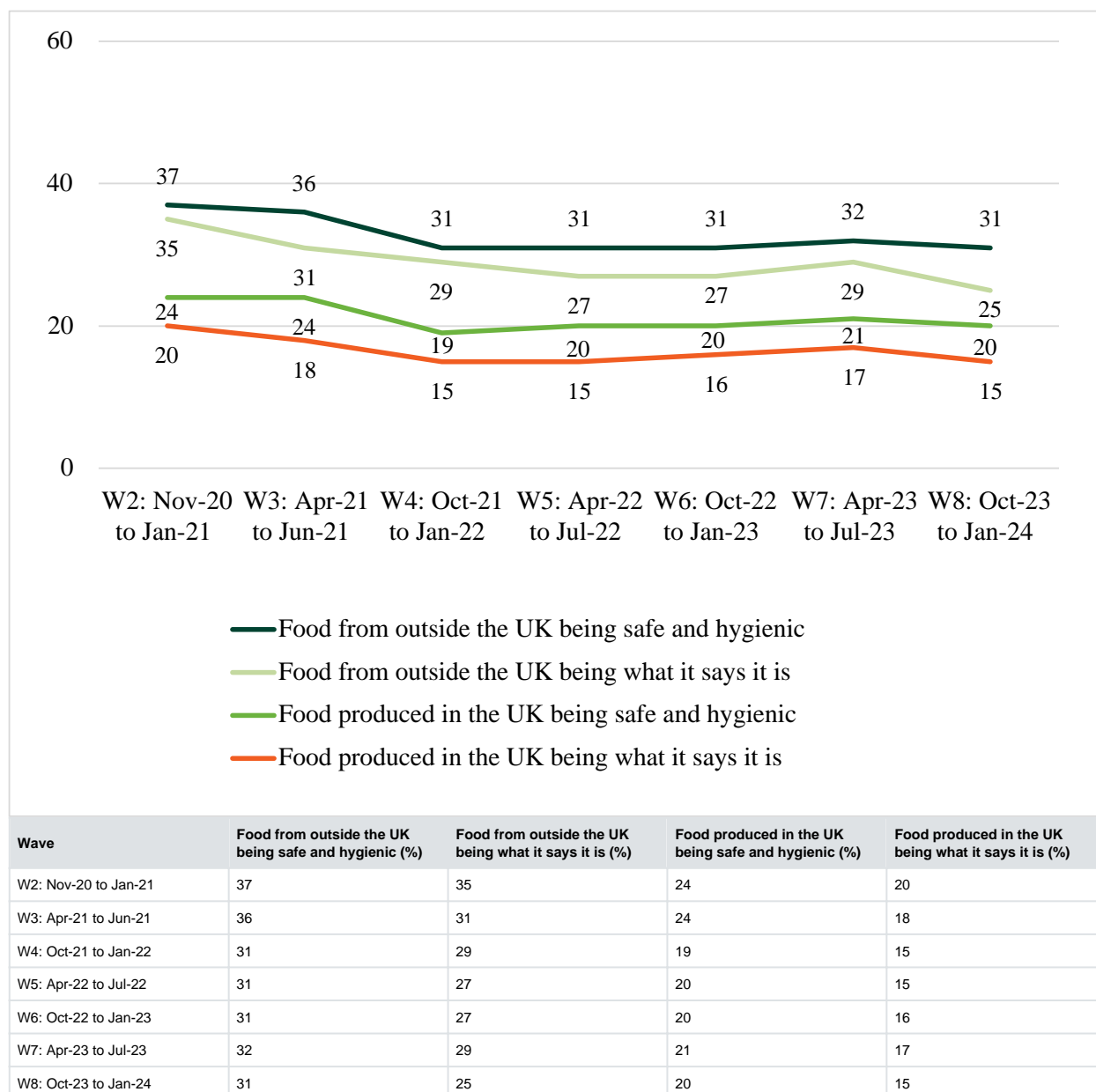
When asked the extent to which respondents were concerned about food produced inside the UK and food produced outside the UK being (i) safe and hygienic, and (ii) what it says it is, a higher percentage of respondents reported being concerned about food from outside the UK than food from inside the UK across all waves.

The percentage of respondents concerned about the safety and authenticity of food from both inside and outside the UK declined in Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022) and have since remained broadly stable (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Those who reported feeling “highly concerned” about food production outside and inside the UK

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Food and You 2: Wave 2-8

- 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 (e.g. Salmonella and E. Coli), 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, the quality of food, the amount of food packaging, being able to eat healthily, none of these, don't know. Total base across waves 1-8 =33,164 (range between 3,617 in Wave 7 and 5,936 in Wave 1), all online respondents. Please note: the data from

this question are not directly comparable across all waves due to new response options being added, see Technical Report for further details.

2. 'The quality of food' has only been asked about since Wave 6 so longer-term trends are not available.
3. 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. Responses: highly concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned, Don't know. Total base across waves 2-8 =27,228 (range between 3,617 in Wave 7 and 5,936 in Wave 1), all online respondents. Please note: some question wording was modified for respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. Please note: data labels only included in graph for "Affordability of food" and "Animal welfare in the food production process"