Global Food Security
Sustainable, healthy food for all

Global Food Security Programme – A survey of public attitudes

Contents

1.   Executive Summary

1.1 General awareness

Around one in ten respondents had heard of the term 'global food security'. Of those aware, the most frequently mentioned definition of what respondents thought the term meant was 'that there is enough food for everyone/the planet' (38%). The second most frequently mentioned description given was 'that we don't run out of food in the future' (15%).

There was very low awareness of the Global Food Security Programme; four per cent of respondents had heard of it.

1.2 Perceived importance of the issue

The issue of food security was seen as more of an issue in the rest of the world today than the UK, however nearly six in ten (58%) did agree that it was an issue in the UK, with around a quarter agreeing that it is a big issue (23%). Nearly nine in ten thought that it was an issue in the rest of the world today; with over a half agreeing that it was a big issue.

Over a half of respondents were receptive to changing their diets to eating less or eating food that takes less to produce. A half agreed that '*people in developed countries such as the UK need to change their diets and eat less or there won't be enough food to go round*' and two thirds thought that '*people should be encouraged to change their diets to eat food that takes less to produce*'.

A majority of respondents agreed that to increase food supply, '*we need to make greater use of science and technology*' (71%). However, respondents also believed that '*to meet the needs of a growing population we need to both grow more food and reduce the amount of food we buy and waste*' (85%); a half of respondents strongly agreed with this.

There was some uncertainty in responses about the issue of supply. Three quarters believed that '*we already grow enough food in the world – the problem is getting it to those who need it most*', whilst six in ten agreed that '*the amount of food produced in the world needs to increase*'.

The price of food was seen as the most important food issue for just over half of respondents; 55% agreed that they were '*more concerned about food prices than all other food issues*'. Nevertheless, there was near universal agreement that the UK '*wastes too much food and people should only buy what they need*' (90%), with 67% strongly agreeing with the statement.

Around a half believed that '*food security is not an issue that affects me rather it's more a problem for people in developing countries*' (55%). Therefore although respondents felt strongly about the price of food and waste in the UK, they do not appear to equate these issues with food security. A third of respondents agreed that they were confident that '*our government will take the necessary steps to make sure there is enough food in the futur*e'.

1.3 Factors affecting global food security in the future

When prompted with a list of factors, population increases were seen as the most likely factor to affect food security in the future (65%). This was followed by climate change (59%) and the price of food (47%).

Similarly, when asked what would have the *most* effect on food security in the future, respondents stated increasing population (34%), climate change (19%), politics and the global economy (13%), and the price of food (12%).

2. Introduction

2.1 Research background

With the world's population predicted to reach 9 billion by 2050, together with the scarcity of natural resources and the impacts from climate change, food security is likely to be one of the most significant public policy issues of this century.

This study is the first stage in a programme of public dialogue to help consider public views, aspirations and concerns around global food security. Given the breadth of this topic, this initial scoping stage of the programme involved the public in identifying areas which warrant future dialogue in more depth. Specifically, this stage was designed to inform and influence the potential for and possible direction of public and stakeholder dialogue work in the future.

As part of this programme of public dialogue, TNS BMRB conducted a face to face omnibus survey to assess the public's views and concerns around global food security.

This report does not cover the qualitative part of the scoping study.

2.2 Aims

The aim of the survey was to benchmark public attitudes, opinions and understandings of global food security.

The specific objective was to provide a benchmark that can be used in the future to evaluate how attitudes, opinions and level of understanding of global food security change with time.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Cognitive testing

To design questions that were useful and easy to understand, participants in the deliberative part of the study were asked to recommend survey questions in terms of language and comprehension. These questions were used as the basis for the omnibus questionnaire.

Following this, cognitive testing was undertaken to test the questions and to make sure that the general public understood the questions being asked, and were able to answer them. The cognitive testing was conducted amongst 20 members of the general public. TNS BMRB provided recommendations for changes to questions or question wording based on feedback from the cognitive testing, and a final questionnaire was produced.

2.3.2 Omnibus survey

Following the cognitive testing, a survey was conducted amongst 1127 members of the general public in the UK, using the TNS omnibus, with a representative sample of respondents. The sampling approach was random location sampling. For the omnibus, quotas are set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewives, presence of children and working status, and within men, working status, to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses.

All interviews were conducted using face to face in home CAPI interviewing (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing).

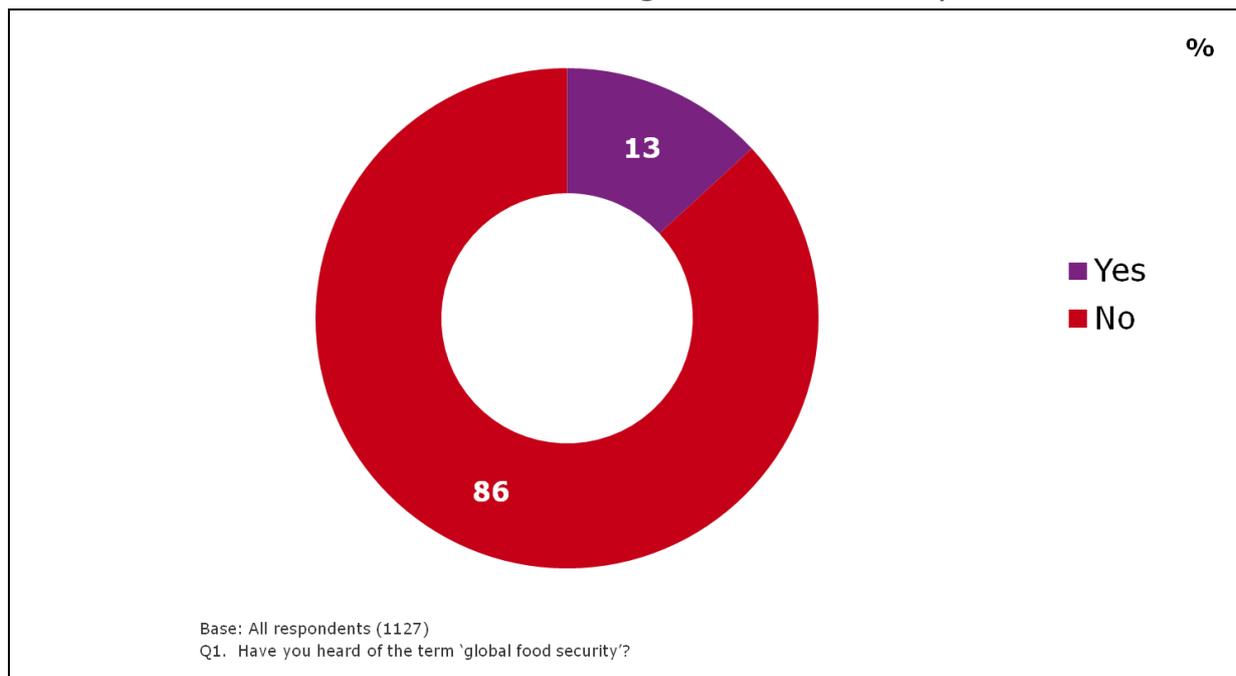Data were weighted to be representative of the population. Only weighted data are shown in this report.

For further details see the appendix.

3. Results

3.1 General awareness

To assess general awareness of global food security, respondents were asked whether they had heard of the term (Chart 3.1).

Chart 3.1 Whether heard of the term 'global food security'

Base: All respondents (1127)
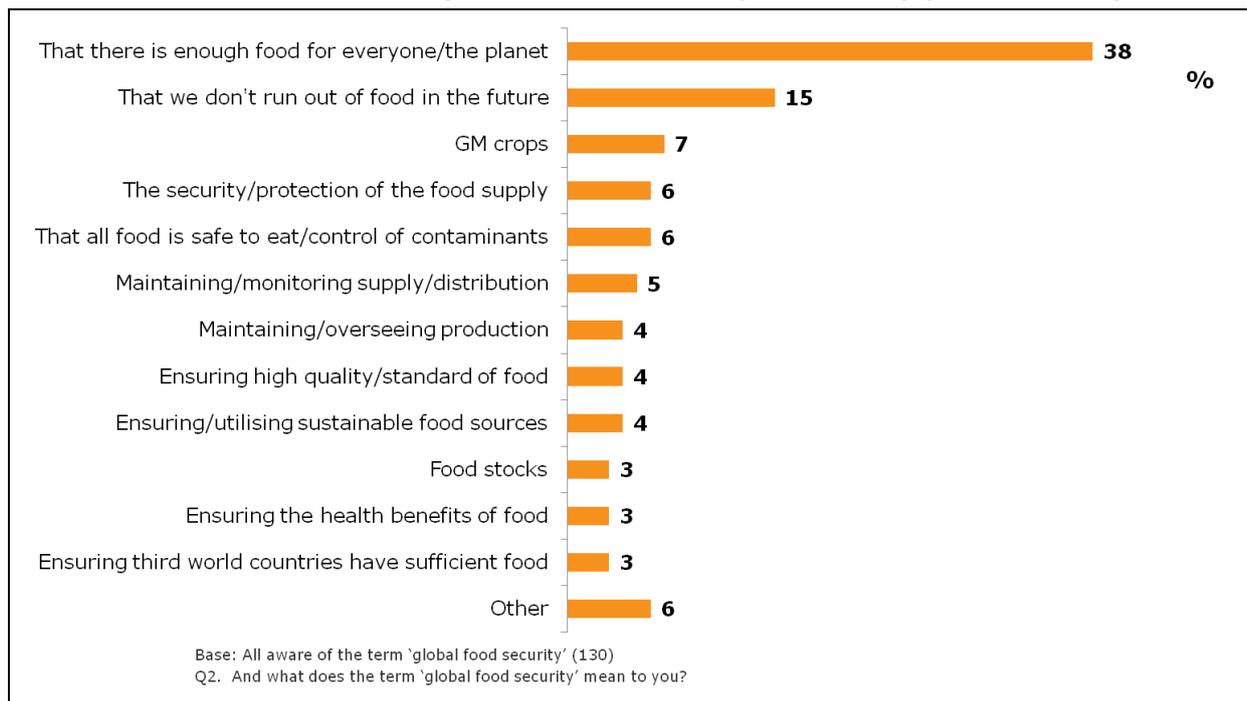Q1. Have you heard of the term 'global food security'?

Around one in ten respondents (13%) had heard of the term 'global food security', whilst nearly nine in ten (86%) were not aware of the term.

Men were significantly more likely than women (17% vs. 10%) to have heard of the term, as were the 16-74 age group (15% compared with 1% of the 75 years and older) and ABC1s (18% vs. 8% of C2DEs). Those who believed that there is an issue with food security in the rest of the world today were also significantly more likely to be aware of the term (13%) compared with those who did not think it was an issue (5%).

Those aware of the term were asked to spontaneously describe what they thought 'global food security' meant (Chart 3.2).

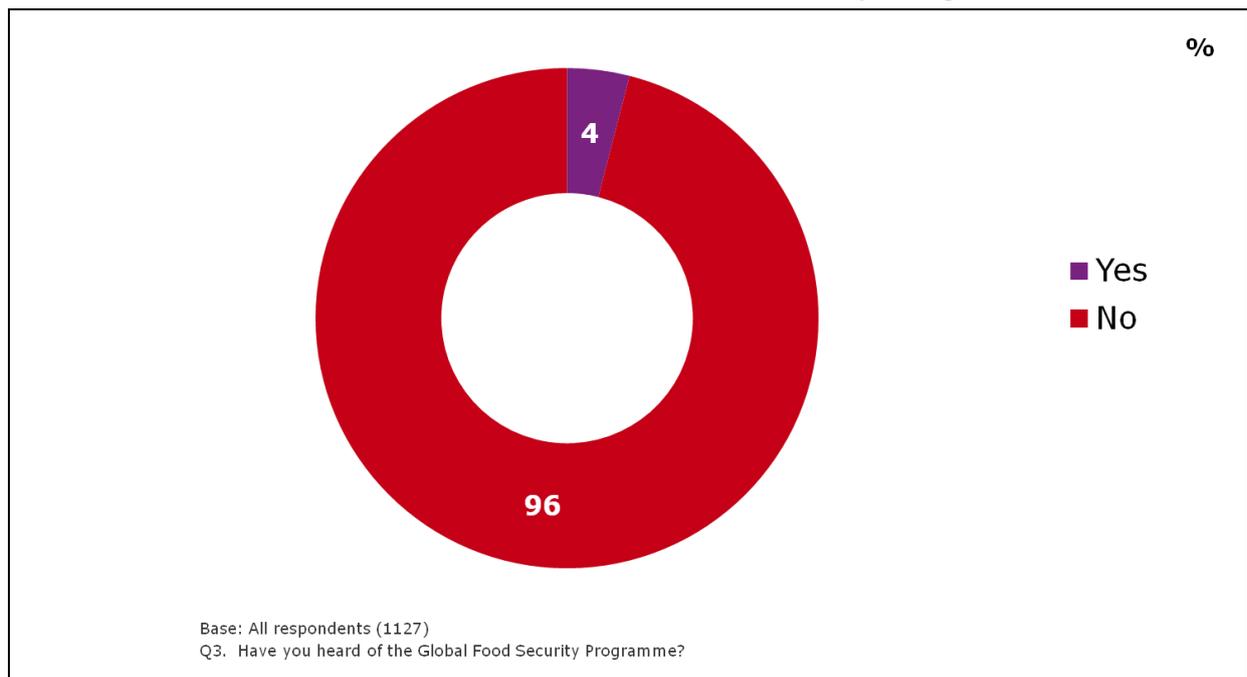*Chart 3.2 What the term 'global food security' means (spontaneous)*

Base: All aware of the term 'global food security' (130)
Q2. And what does the term 'global food security' mean to you?

The most likely mentioned definition, by four in ten respondents, was '*that there is enough food for everyone/the planet*' (38%). Around one sixth believed it referred to not running out of food in the future or that there is enough food for future generations (15%).

All other items were mentioned by under one in ten respondents. Seven per cent mentioned GM crops and six per cent the security or protection of the food supply or safety of food/control of contaminants. Around five per cent said maintaining supply and distribution (5%) or maintaining or overseeing production (4%).

Sub group base sizes are too small for comparison.

To assess awareness of the Global Food Security Programme, respondents were asked if they heard of the programme (Chart 3.3).

Chart 3.3 Whether heard of the Global Food Security Programme

%

4

96

■ Yes
■ No

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q3. Have you heard of the Global Food Security Programme?

There was very low awareness of the Global Food Security Programme. Four per cent of respondents said they had heard of it; 96% had not.
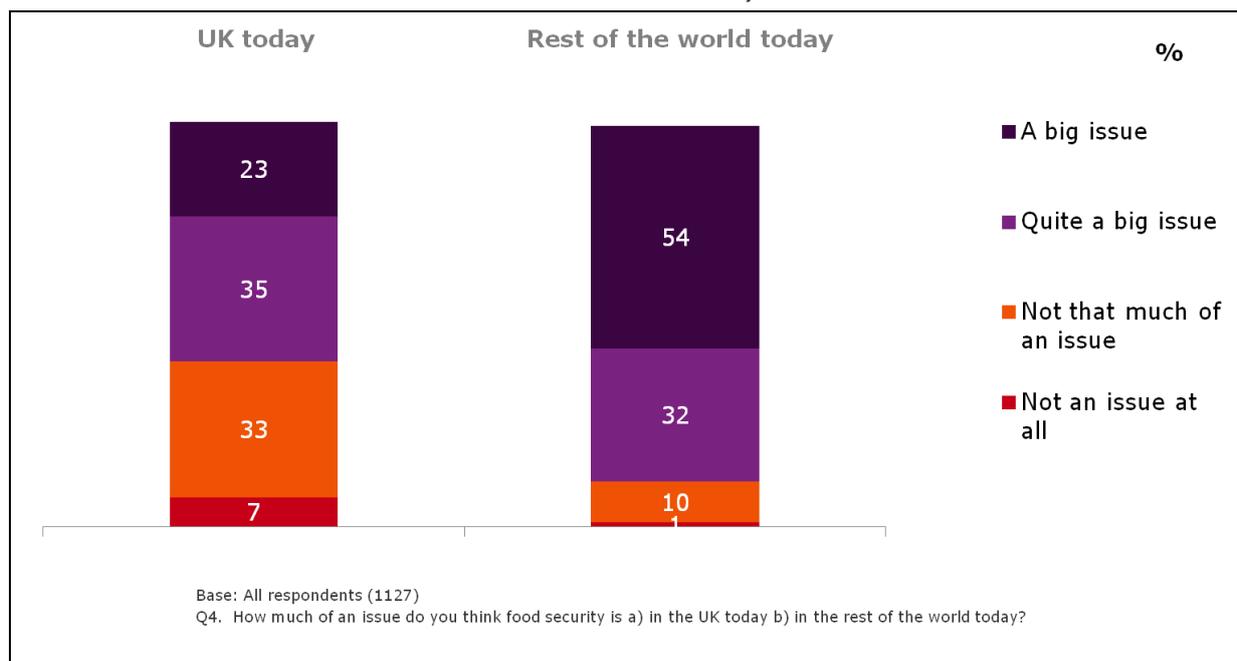
Those aware of the term 'global food security' were significantly more likely to have heard of the Global Food Security Programme (22% vs. 1%).

All respondents in the 75 years and over group had not heard of the programme, as had no one in the North East and the East Midlands.

3.2 Perceived importance of the issue

To understand how much of an issue respondents thought global food security was, they were asked to rate the issue of global food security in the UK today and then secondly, the rest of the world (Chart 3.4).

Chart 3.4 How much of an issue food security is in the...

UK today · Rest of the world today · %

UK today: A big issue 23, Quite a big issue 35, Not that much of an issue 33, Not an issue at all 7

Rest of the world today: A big issue 54, Quite a big issue 32, Not that much of an issue 10, Not an issue at all 1

Legend: A big issue · Quite a big issue · Not that much of an issue · Not an issue at all

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q4. How much of an issue do you think food security is a) in the UK today b) in the rest of the world today?

The issue of food security was seen as more of an issue in the rest of the world today than the UK, however nearly six in ten (58%) did agree that it was an issue in the UK, with around a quarter agreeing that it is a big issue (23%). A third stated that it was not that much of an issue.
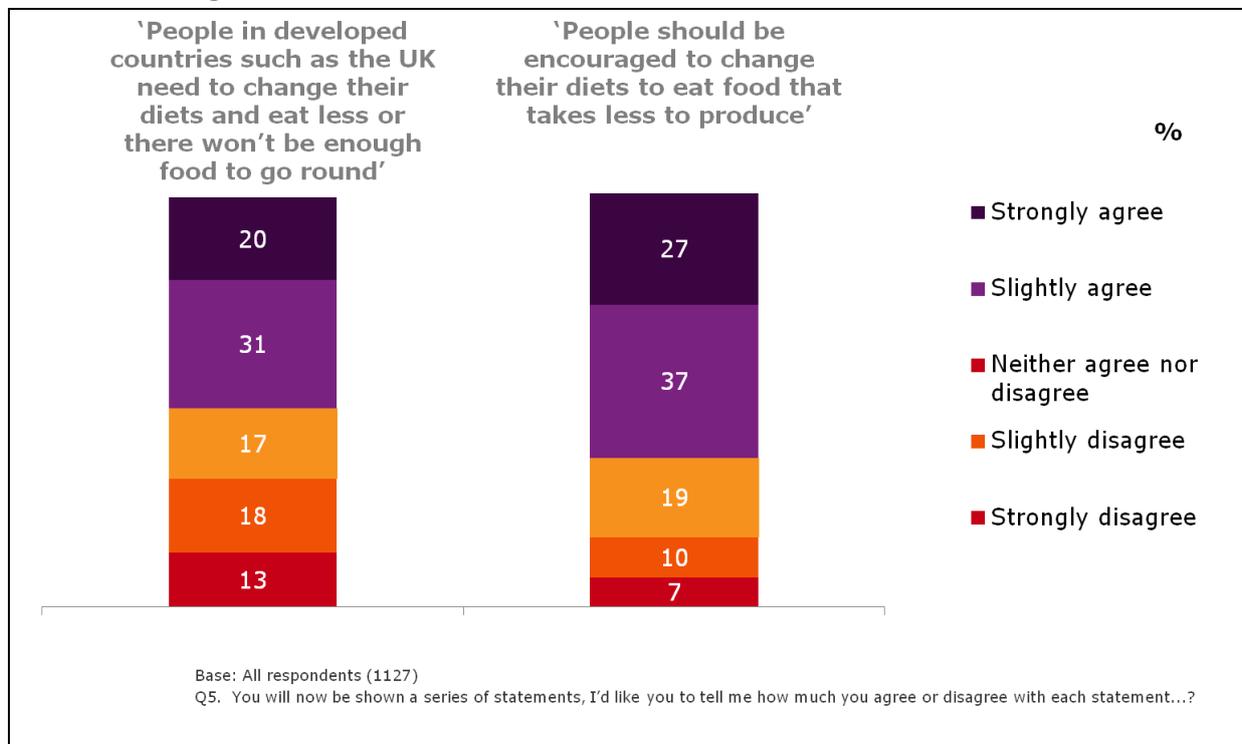
Women were significantly more likely to agree that food security is an issue in the UK today (63%) than men (53%). Those of White ethnic origin also were significantly more likely to agree (59% compared with 48% BME) as were respondents who believed food security is an issue in the rest of the world today (65% vs. 14%).

Respondents were more likely to believe that food security is an issue in the rest of the world today. Nearly nine in ten (86%) thought that it was an issue in the rest of the world today and over a half agreed that it was a big issue (54%).

The 45-54 year old group were significantly more likely to agree that this was an issue (92%) compared with the 75+ age group (80%). ABC1s (89% vs. 83% of C2DEs), those who had heard of 'global food security' (96% vs. 85% of those who had not), and those who thought there was an issue in the UK today (97% vs. 75% of those who did not) were also significantly more likely to agree.

Respondents were then asked how much they agreed with a number of statements around the varying issues linked with global food security (Chart 3.5 – 3.9).
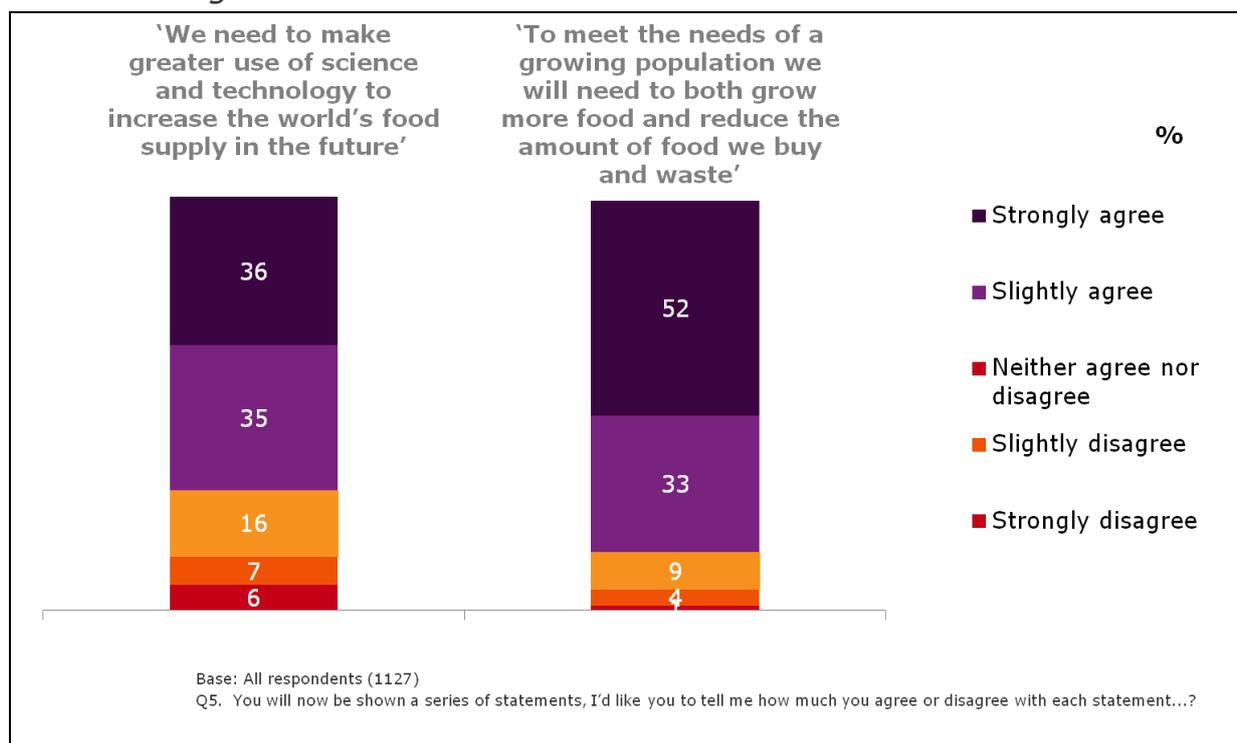
Chart 3.5 Agreement with statement...

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q5. You will now be shown a series of statements, I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement...?

A half of respondents agreed that '*people in developed countries such as the UK need to change their diets and eat less or there won't be enough food to go round*' (51%). Three in ten disagreed with the statement (31%), so this is therefore an area to improve upon.

75 year olds and over were significantly more likely to agree with this (66% compared with 47% of 16-54 year olds), as were those who agreed that food security is an issue in the UK today (56% vs. 45%) and in the rest of the world today (53% vs. 40%).

Similarly, two thirds agreed that '*people should be encouraged to change their diets to eat food that takes less to produce*' (64%) whilst two in ten disagreed (17%).

55-74 year olds were significantly more likely to agree (70% vs. 57% of 35-44 year olds), as were those who though food security was an issue in the UK today (70%) and the rest of the world today (65%) (compared with 57% and 54% respectively).

Chart 3.6 Agreement with statement...

'We need to make greater use of science and technology to increase the world's food supply in the future'

'To meet the needs of a growing population we will need to both grow more food and reduce the amount of food we buy and waste'

%

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree

Chart values — first statement: 36, 35, 16, 7, 6

Chart values — second statement: 52, 33, 9, 4

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q5. You will now be shown a series of statements, I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement...?

There was agreement amongst respondents that we need to utilise science and technology. Seven in ten agreed that '*we need to make greater use of science and technology to increase the world's food supply in the future*' (71%).
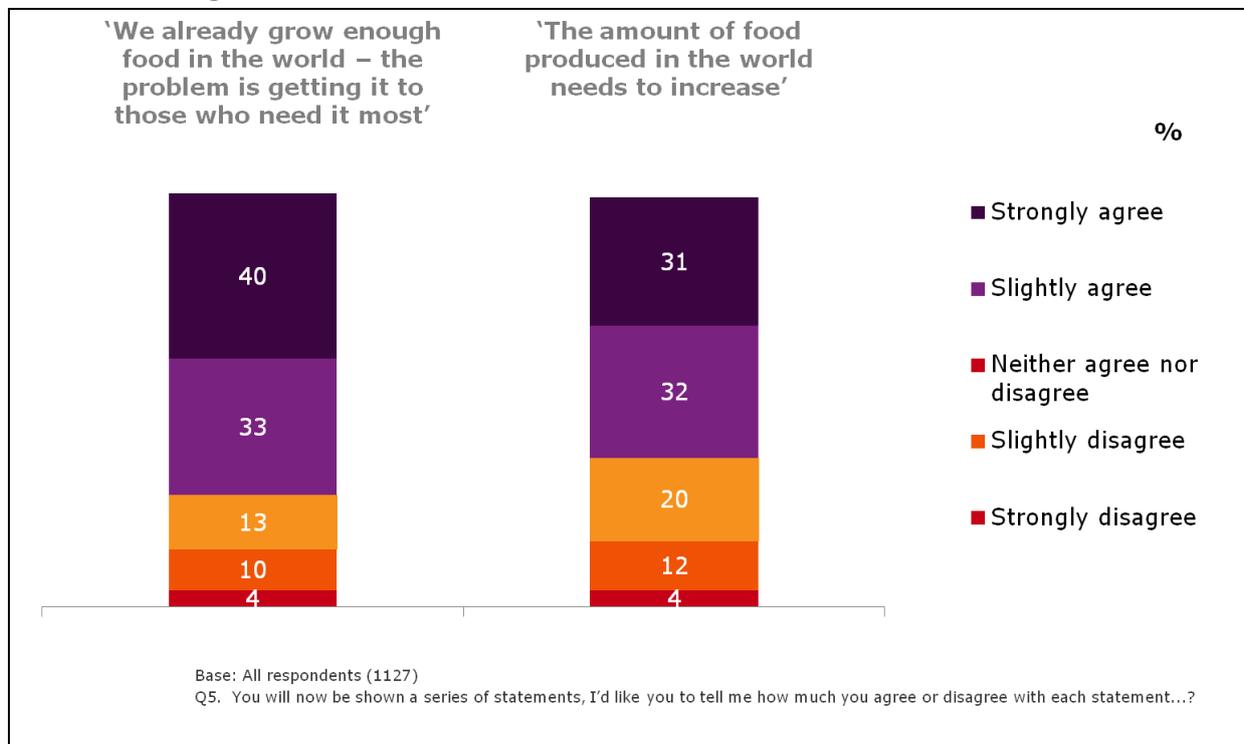
25-34s (66%) were significantly less likely than the 16-24s (76%) and the 55-74s (75%) to agree with this. ABC1s were significantly more likely to agree (74% vs. 67% of C2DEs), as were those aware of the term 'global food security (80% vs. 70% not aware) and those who thought food security was an issue in the rest of the world today (73% compared with 56% of those who did not).

Whilst science and technology is thought to have a role to play, respondents also believed that we need to reduce waste as well as grow more food. The majority of respondents agreed that '*to meet the needs of a growing population we will need to both grow more food and reduce the amount of food we buy and waste*' (85%), with a half strongly agreeing with the statement (52%).

Those in the oldest age group (75+) were significantly more likely (93%) than 25-44 year olds (82%) to agree. Similarly respondents who thought

food security was an issue in the UK today and the rest of the world today were significantly more likely to agree (90% vs. 81%; 88% vs. 68% respectively).
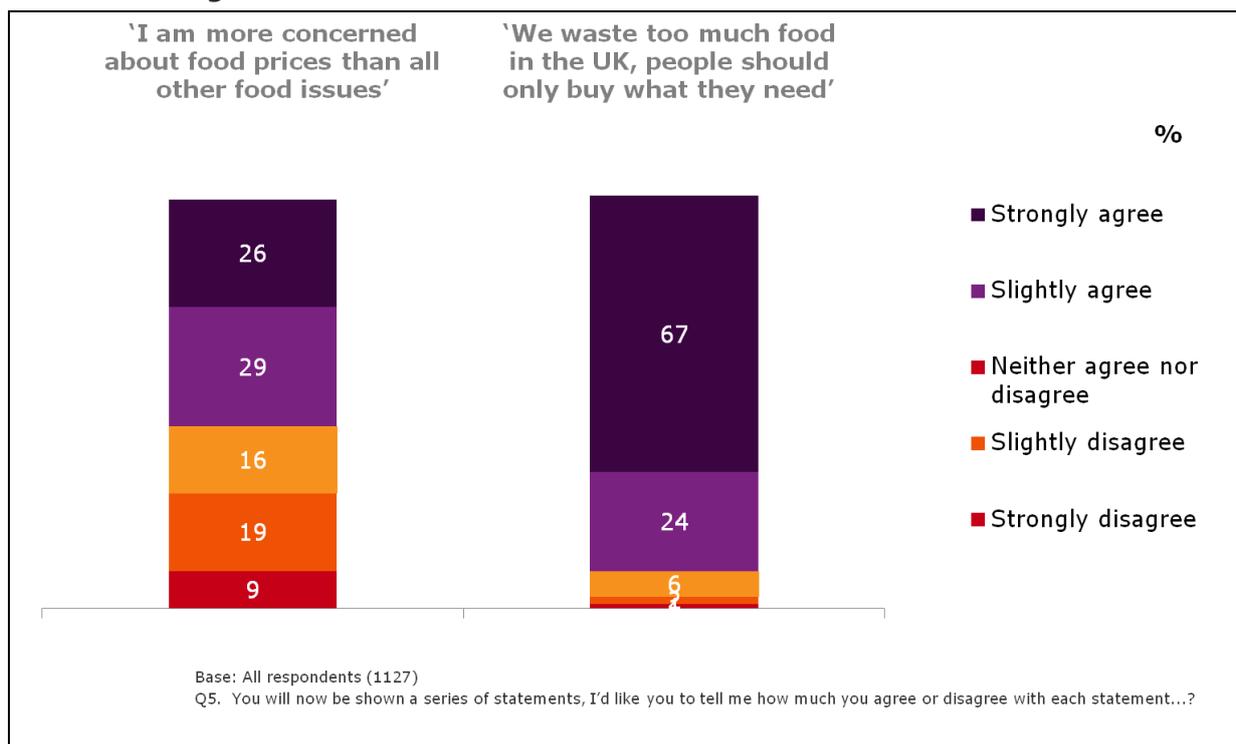
Chart 3.7 Agreement with statement...

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q5. You will now be shown a series of statements, I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement...?

Respondents were also asked about the issue of supply. Three quarters agreed that '*we already grow enough food in the world – the problem is getting it to those who need it most*' (73%). Four in ten agreed strongly with this.

The oldest age group were significantly more likely to agree (80%) compared with the 25-34s (67%).

However six in ten respondents (64%) agreed that '*the amount of food produced in the world needs to increase*', with three in ten strongly agreeing (31%). This, therefore, suggests that respondents are unsure about the amount of food produced in the world and where it is supplied, and this is perhaps an area that needs to be focused on in the future.

The older age group (55+) were significantly more likely to agree than the 25-44s (71% vs. 55%) as were those who thought that food security was an issue in the rest of the world today (66% vs. 48%).
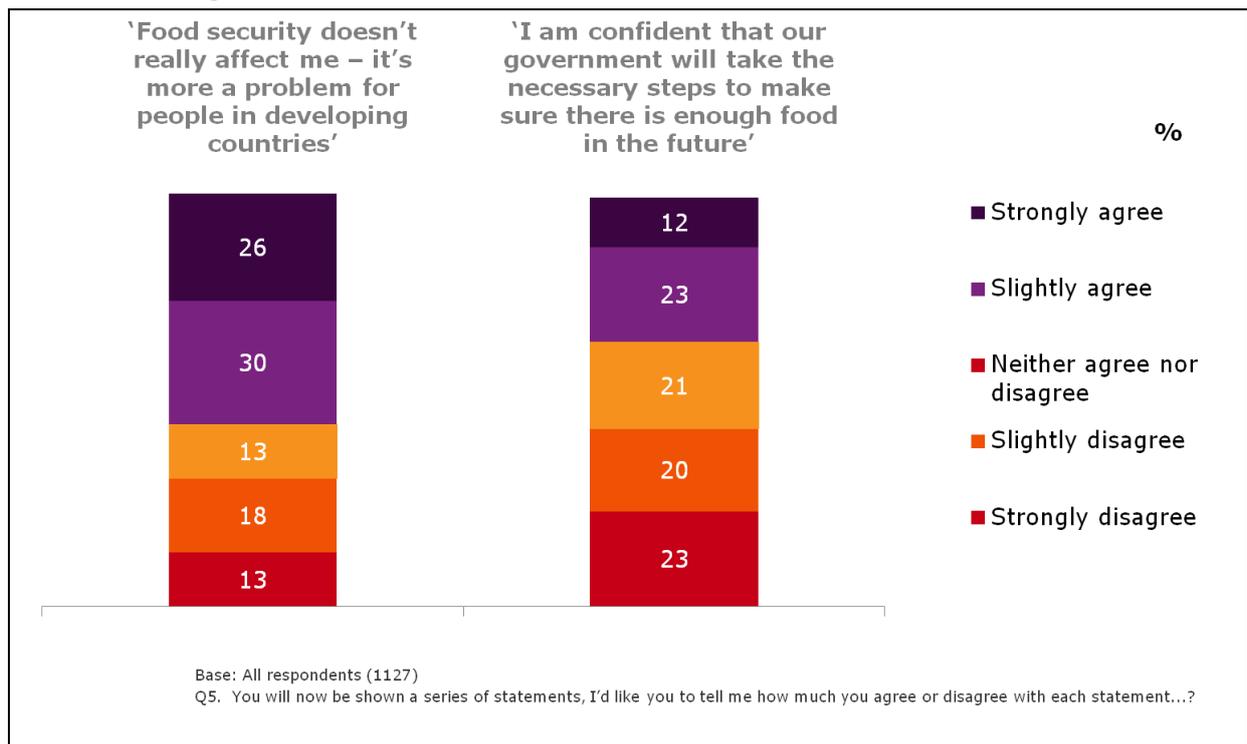
Chart 3.8 Agreement with statement...

The issue of the price of food and food waste was also asked about. Whilst just over half respondents agreed that they were '*more concerned about food prices than all other food issues*' (55%), they were more likely to agree that the amount of waste the UK produces is an issue.

The oldest age group (68%) were significantly more likely to agree that they were concerned about food prices than all other food issues than the 16-24s (52%) and 35-44s (60%). C2DEs also were significantly more likely (65% vs. 47% of ABC1s), and those who had not heard of the term 'global food security (58% compared with 37% of those who had).

There was near universal agreement that the UK '*wastes too much food and people should only buy what they need*' (90%), which was driven by 67% strongly agreeing with the statement.

The oldest age group were, again, significantly more likely to agree (98% compared with 87% of 16-34s) as were respondents who thought food security was an issue in the rest of the world today (93% vs. 75% who had not).

Chart 3.9 Agreement with statement...

'Food security doesn't really affect me – it's more a problem for people in developing countries'

'I am confident that our government will take the necessary steps to make sure there is enough food in the future'

%

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Slightly agree
- ■ Neither agree nor disagree
- ■ Slightly disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q5. You will now be shown a series of statements, I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement...?

Around a half of respondents agreed that '*food security is not an issue that affects me rather it's more a problem for people in developing countries'* (55%). This suggests that although respondents felt strongly about the price of food and waste in the UK they do not equate these issues with food security.

The 75+ were most likely to agree with this statement (73%) and the 35-54s the least (46%). C2DEs were significantly more likely to agree (59% vs. 52% of ABC1s), as were those who had not heard of 'global food security' (57% vs. 43% who had), the Global Food Security Programme (56% vs. 36% who had) and respondents who thought food security was not an issue in the UK today (69% vs. 46% who did).
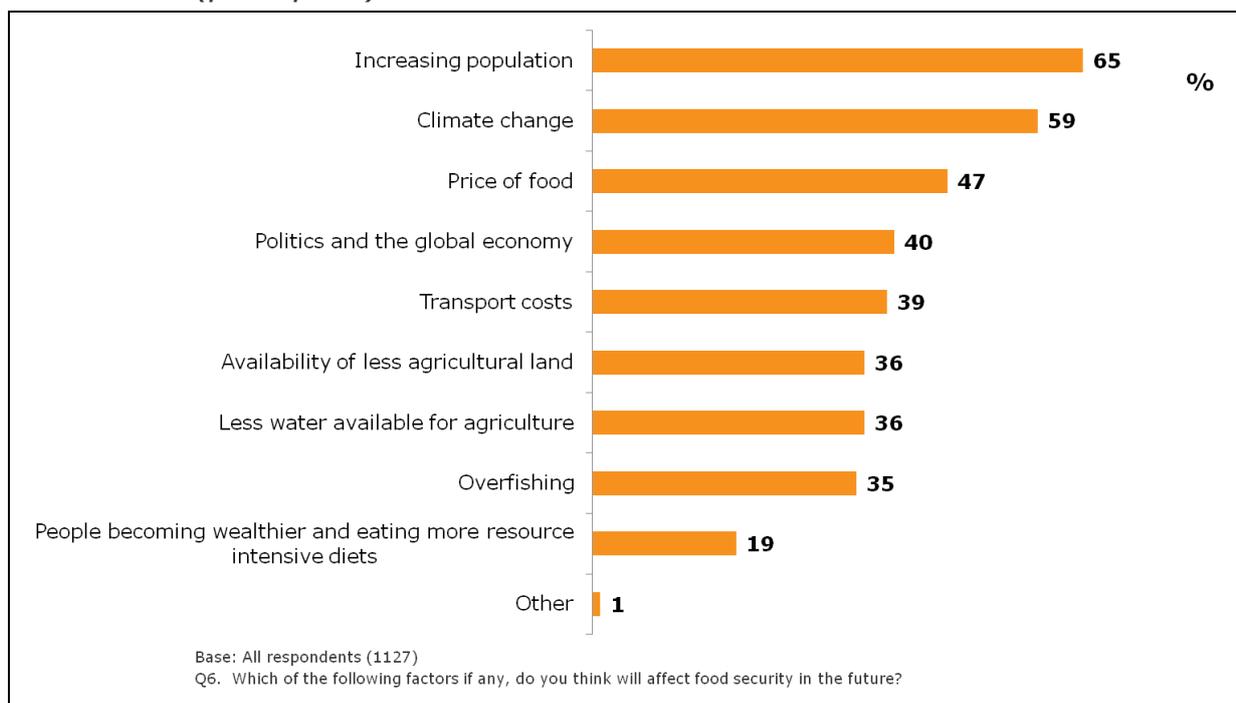
Strength of disagreement (43%) over the statement '*I am confident that our government will take the necessary steps to make sure there is enough food in the future*' outweighed agreement (35%).
BMEs were significantly more likely to agree (53% vs. 32% of Whites) as were C2DEs (39% compared with 31% of ABC1s).

3.3 Factors affecting global food security in the future

Respondents were prompted with a list of factors, and asked if they thought any would affect food security in the future (Chart 3.10).

Chart 3.10 Whether any of the following factors will affect food security in the future (prompted)

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q6. Which of the following factors if any, do you think will affect food security in the future?
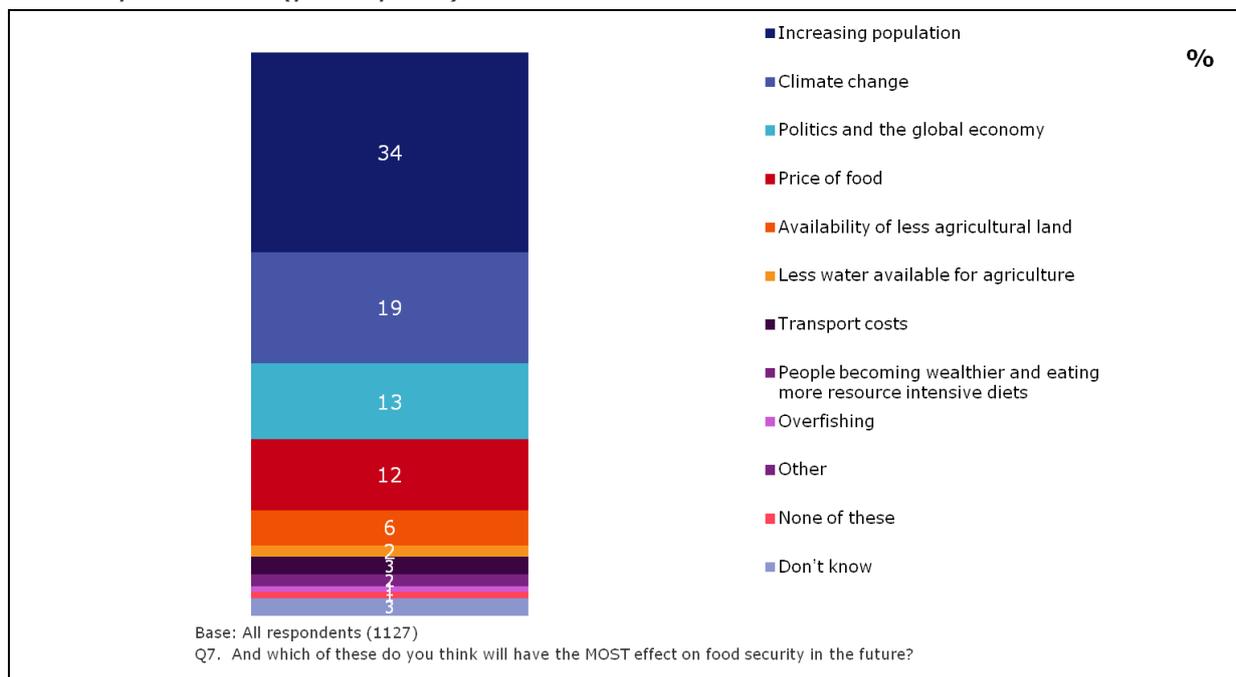
Population increases were seen as the most likely factor to affect food security in the future (65%). This was followed by climate change (59%) and the price of food (47%). Around four in ten stated politics and the global economy (40%); transport costs (39%); availability of less agricultural land and less water available for agriculture (36% for both); and overfishing (35%). Respondents were least likely to choose people becoming wealthier and eating more resource intensive diets as a factor (19%).

The 75+ age group, ABC1s and those who thought food security was an issue in the rest of the world today were significantly more likely to choose increasing population as a factor that will affect food security in the future.

Finally, respondents were asked which they thought would have the *most* effect on food security in the future (Chart 3.11).

*Chart 3.11 Which will have the most effect on food security in the future –
all respondents (prompted)*

Legend:
- Increasing population
- Climate change
- Politics and the global economy
- Price of food
- Availability of less agricultural land
- Less water available for agriculture
- Transport costs
- People becoming wealthier and eating more resource intensive diets
- Overfishing
- Other
- None of these
- Don't know

%

Chart values (top to bottom): 34, 19, 13, 12, 6, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 1, 3

Base: All respondents (1127)
Q7. And which of these do you think will have the MOST effect on food security in the future?
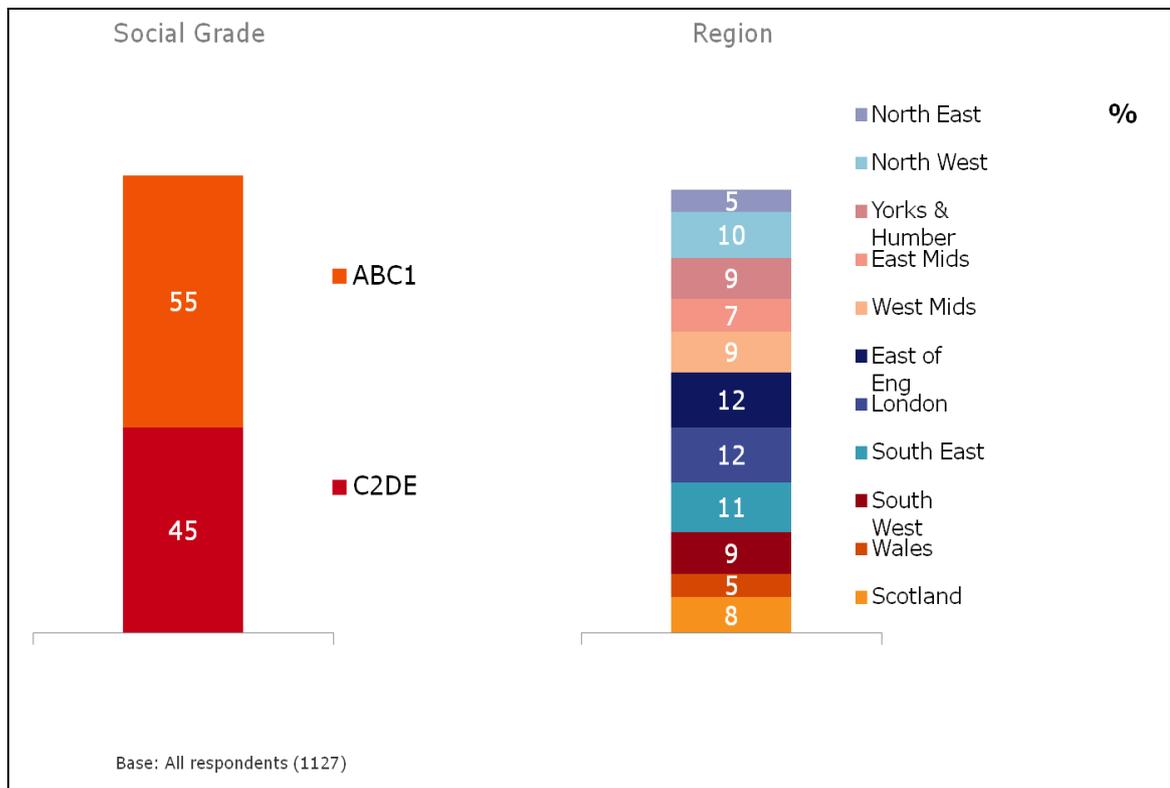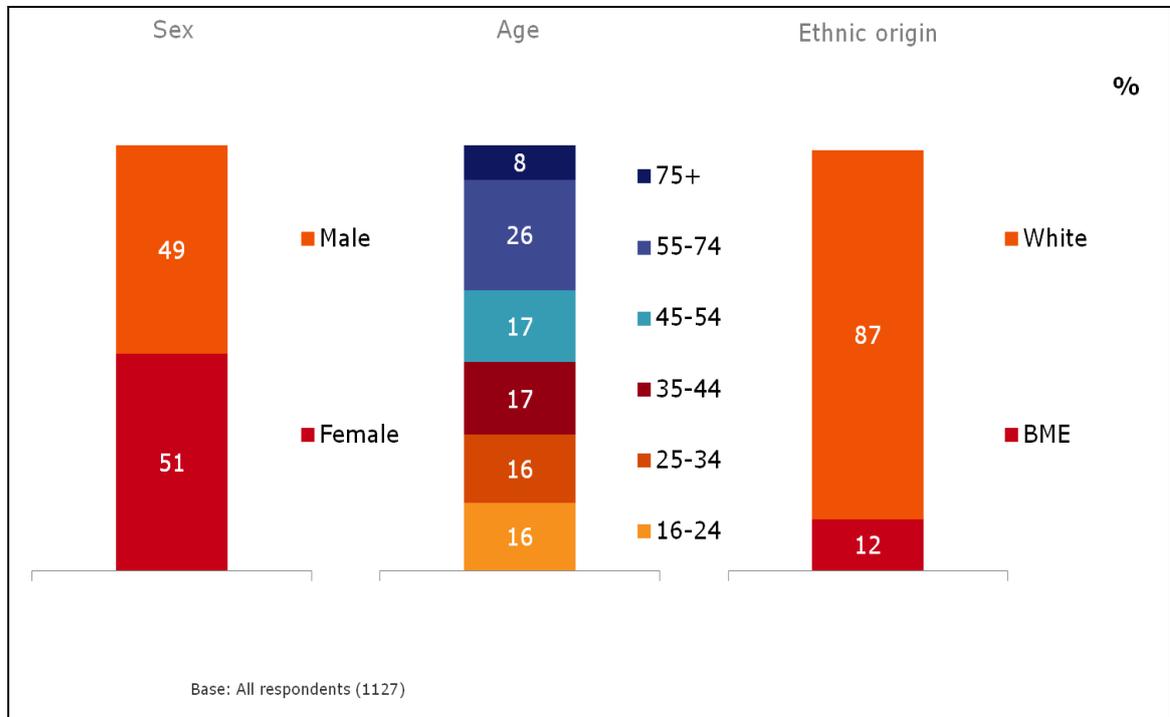
Similarly, increasing population was seen to have the *most* effect on food security (34%), followed by climate change (19%), politics and the global economy (13%) and the price of food (12%).

Again, the 75+ age group, ABC1s and those who thought food security was an issue in the rest of the world today were significantly more likely to choose increasing population as a factor that will affect food security in the future.

Around one in twenty or less said any of the other factors would have the most effect on food security in the future.

4. Appendix – Demographics

Base: All respondents (1127)

Base: All respondents (1127)

5. Appendix – Sampling and weighting

5.1 Sampling

The face to face Omnibus employs a random location methodology, using sampling points which are sub samples of those determined in a stratified sampling system.

Sampling Frame

2001 Census small area statistics and the Postal Address File (PAF) are used to define sample points. These are areas of similar population sizes formed by the combination of wards, with the constraint that each point must be contained within a single Government Office Region (GOR). In addition, geographic systems are employed to minimise the drive time required to cover each area as optimally as possible.

600 points are defined south of the Caledonian Canal in Great Britain (GB), and, for UK samples, another 25 points are defined in a similar fashion in Northern Ireland. A further 5 points are defined north of the Caledonian Canal. These differ in size from the other points and each other to meet the need to separately cover the different parts of the Highlands and Islands.

Stratification and Sample Point Selection

285 points are selected south of the Caledonian Canal for use by the Omnibus after stratification by Government Office Region and Social Grade. They are also checked to ensure they are representative by an urban and rural classification. Those points are divided into two replicates. Each set is used in alternate weeks. A further point north of the Caledonian Canal is issued every other week.

16 of the points in Northern Ireland are selected and divided into four replicates. Those replicates are used in rotation to give a wide spread across the Province over time in the UK samples. Similarly the statistical accuracy of the GB sampling is maximised by issuing sequential waves of fieldwork systematically across the sampling frame to provide maximum geographical dispersion. This ensures that the sample point selection remains representative for any specific fieldwork wave.

Selection of Clusters within Sampling Points

All the sample points in the sampling frame are divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete wards. For the Omnibus, alternate

A and B halves are worked each wave of fieldwork. Each week different wards are selected in each required half and Census Output Areas selected within those wards. Then, groups of Output Areas containing a minimum of 125 addresses are sampled in those areas from the PAF.

5.2 Interviewing and Quota Control

Assignments are conducted over two days of fieldwork and are carried out on weekdays from 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. and at the weekend. Quotas are set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, presence of children and working status, and within men, working status, to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses, primarily to account for different probabilities of people being in when the interviewer calls. Interviewers are instructed to leave 3 doors between each successful interview.

5.3 Weighting

The data are weighted to ensure that demographic profiles match those for all adults in the United Kingdom aged 16 or over. A rim weighting technique is used in which target profiles are set for five separate demographic variables. The computer system then allocates a weight to each individual such that the overall composition of the sample is balanced in terms of the targets set.

The actual weights applied thus vary slightly between surveys; precise figures for specific cases are available if required.

TNS

Global Food Security
Sustainable, healthy food for all

Global Food Security Programme

Global Food Security is a multi-agency programme bringing together the research interests of the Research Councils, Executive Agencies and Government Departments.

Through Global Food Security the partners are working together to support research to meet the challenge of providing the world's growing population with a sustainable, and secure supply of safe, nutritious and affordable high quality food from less land and with lower inputs.

Partner and sponsor organisations are:

- Research Councils UK comprising:
    - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
    - Economic and Social Research Council
    - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
    - Medical Research Council
    - Natural Environment Research Council
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for International Development
- Food Standards Agency
- Government Office for Science
- Scottish Government
- Technology Strategy Board
- Welsh Government

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