



The Centre for Global Food and Resources

## The Vietnam urban food consumption and expenditure study

### Factsheet 7: Urban Vietnamese consumers' concerns about diet, nutrition and food safety

**This factsheet provides an overview of urban Vietnamese consumers' attitudes related to diet, nutrition and food safety.**

**Most urban Vietnamese consumers expressed concerns about both food safety and nutrition. Concerns about 'bacterial contamination' in food, in particular, were the greatest (on average) for urban consumers.**

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with ten attitudinal statements (see Figure 1) that were designed to ascertain consumers' attitudes with respect to diet, nutrition and food safety. Respondents used a five-point Likert scale to indicate how strongly they agreed (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Somewhat disagree; 3 = Indifferent/Unsure; 4 = Somewhat agree; and 5 = Strongly agree) with the ten attitudinal statements.

The results indicate a relatively high level of concern about food safety, in particular. The results also suggest that the urban consumers in the sample are nutrition-conscious (Figure 1).

This result is not surprising. Consumers in urban areas of Vietnam are increasingly exposed (through media, including news reports, social media, etc.) to information about diet, nutrition, food safety issues as well as the methods used to produce food. Also, with growing incomes more consumers can afford to be selective with their purchase decisions i.e. purchase high quality products only.

Results differ across cities but the average agreement score across cities ranges from

4.04 to 4.52 for all 10 statements indicating that consumers in each of the four cities are in agreement but to a relatively greater or lesser extent on different issues (Figure 1).

Relatively speaking, the consumers in our sample are more concerned with food safety issues such as heavy metal, bacterial or pesticide contamination, as compared to nutrition issues such as high sugar or salt content.

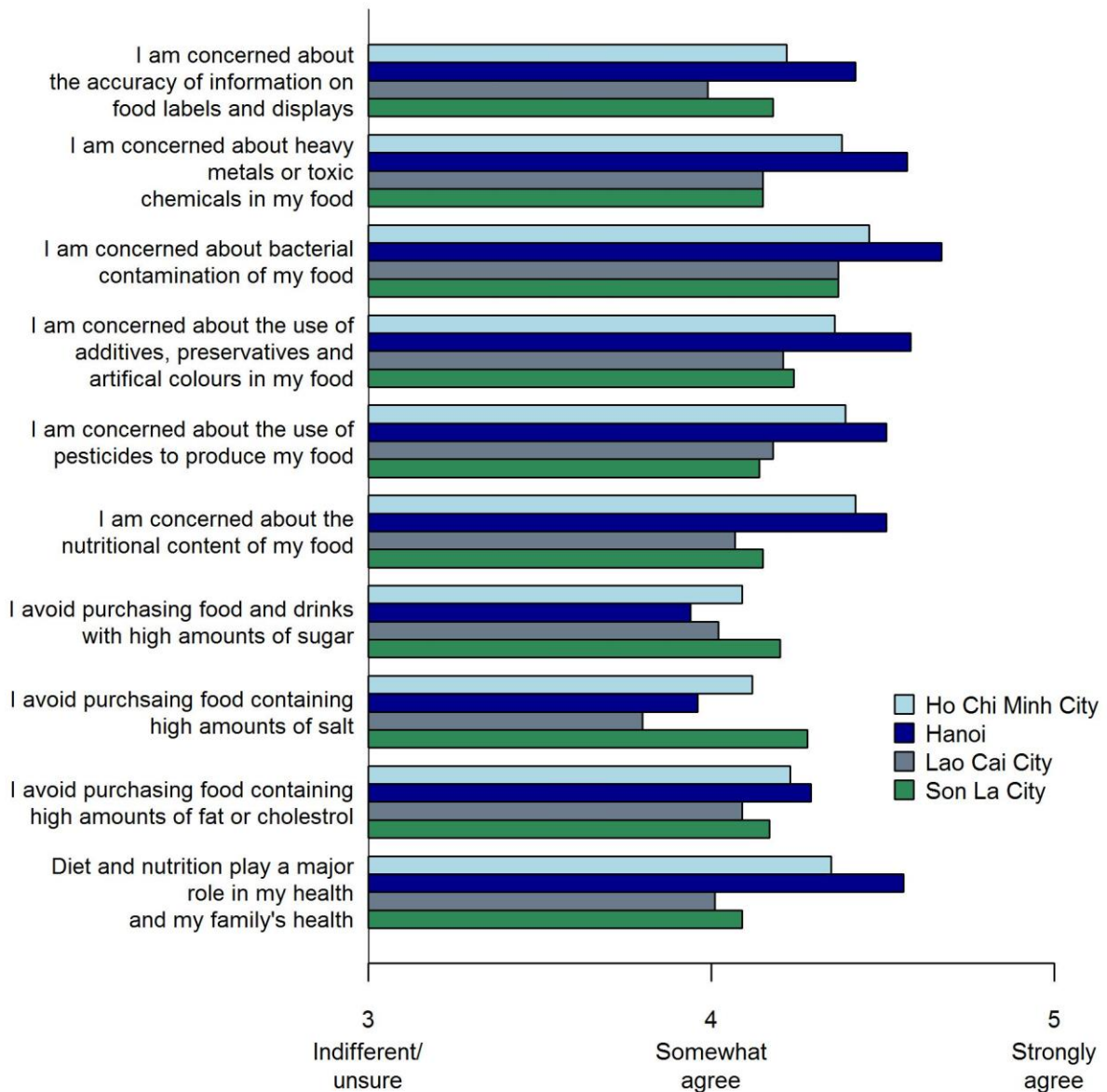
Further, consumers in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City appear to be more concerned about food safety compared to consumers in the smaller regional cities, Son La City and Lao Cai City. Further, Hanoi consumers appear to be the most concerned with food safety, particularly bacterial contaminants, relative to consumers in the other three locations.

This data provides quantitative evidence that supports many anecdotal suggestions of food safety and nutrition concerns that are increasingly influencing consumer decision making in Vietnam.

**From a research for development perspective this information allows us to think about interventions in the food supply chain that can benefit producers and consumers.** For example, knowing that consumers are concerned about pesticide, bacterial and heavy metal contamination we must consider opportunities to build trust between producers and consumers with respect to these issues. This could come in the form of improved food labelling, dietary guidelines or by building institutional arrangements in certification programs (e.g. Good Agricultural Practice programs such as

VietGAP). These results also suggest there are opportunities for producers to directly market to consumers who are most concerned about food safety. Future research will explore characteristics (e.g. socio-demographics, attitudes, behavioural) of consumers who are

most concerned about various food safety issues and who may be willing to pay premiums for products which are marketed with extra food safety and/or quality guarantees.



**Figure 1.** Mean responses to statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns by consumers in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Lao Cai City and Son La City, Vietnam. A Likert scale was used where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Somewhat disagree; 3 = Indifferent/Unsure; 4 = Somewhat agree; and 5 = Strongly agree. See Table A1 to A5 in the appendix for the share of respondents

## Appendix to Factsheet 7

### Percentages used to generate graphs

**Table A1.** Share (%) of respondents indicating each level of agreement to the statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns, averaged across sample in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Lao Cai City and Son La City, Vietnam.

Statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Indifferent	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Diet and nutrition play a major role in my health and the health of my family	0.05%	0.10%	7.13%	38.44%	54.29%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of fat or cholesterol	0.10%	0.92%	14.25%	44.45%	40.28%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of salt	0.29%	3.05%	23.12%	39.65%	33.88%
I avoid purchasing food & drinks with high amounts of sugar	0.39%	4.12%	20.99%	42.03%	32.48%
I am concerned about the nutritional content of my food	0.00%	0.34%	8.68%	41.01%	49.98%
I am concerned about the use of pesticides to produce my food	0.05%	0.58%	8.29%	41.69%	49.39%
I am concerned about the use of additives, preservatives and artificial colours in my food	0.19%	0.53%	8.58%	39.12%	51.58%
I am concerned about bacterial contamination of my food	0.00%	0.34%	4.90%	36.45%	58.31%
I am concerned about heavy metals or toxic chemicals	0.05%	0.58%	8.77%	39.07%	51.53%
I am concerned about the accuracy of information on food labels and food displays	0.05%	0.73%	12.07%	46.73%	40.43%

**Table A2.** Share (%) of respondents indicating each level of agreement to the statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns by consumers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Indifferent	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Diet and nutrition play a major role in my health and the health of my family	0.00%	0.10%	6.08%	37.39%	56.43%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of fat or cholesterol	0.00%	1.11%	13.48%	43.47%	41.95%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of salt	0.10%	2.74%	23.20%	39.01%	34.95%
I avoid purchasing food & drinks with high amounts of sugar	0.20%	4.26%	19.86%	43.06%	32.62%
I am concerned about the nutritional content of my food	0.00%	0.10%	9.12%	40.83%	49.95%
I am concerned about the use of pesticides to produce my food	0.10%	0.20%	9.12%	40.73%	49.85%
I am concerned about the use of additives, preservatives and artificial colours in my food	0.10%	0.41%	7.80%	40.53%	51.17%
I am concerned about bacterial contamination of my food	0.00%	0.00%	4.15%	36.68%	59.17%
I am concerned about heavy metals or toxic chemicals	0.00%	0.51%	8.11%	39.31%	52.08%
I am concerned about the accuracy of information on food labels and food displays	0.00%	0.81%	12.16%	46.40%	40.63%

**Table A3.** Share (%) of respondents indicating each level of agreement to the statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns by consumers in Hanoi, Vietnam.

<b>Statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Diet and nutrition play a major role in my health and the health of my family	0.13%	0.00%	7.72%	37.84%	54.31%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of fat or cholesterol	0.13%	0.39%	14.16%	46.20%	39.12%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of salt	0.39%	2.45%	21.24%	41.18%	34.75%
I avoid purchasing food & drinks with high amounts of sugar	0.64%	3.47%	20.85%	40.80%	34.23%
I am concerned about the nutritional content of my food	0.00%	0.51%	8.62%	39.25%	51.61%
I am concerned about the use of pesticides to produce my food	0.00%	1.03%	7.21%	42.47%	49.29%
I am concerned about the use of additives, preservatives and artificial colours in my food	0.39%	0.77%	9.52%	37.84%	51.48%
I am concerned about bacterial contamination of my food	0.00%	0.64%	5.53%	35.78%	58.04%
I am concerned about heavy metals or toxic chemicals	0.13%	0.64%	9.01%	37.71%	52.51%
I am concerned about the accuracy of information on food labels and food displays	0.13%	0.39%	12.48%	45.56%	41.44%

**Table A4.** Share (%) of respondents indicating each level of agreement to the statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns in Lao Cai City, Vietnam.

<b>Statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Diet and nutrition play a major role in my health and the health of my family	0.00%	0.00%	10.81%	45.95%	43.24%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of fat or cholesterol	0.68%	2.03%	16.89%	42.57%	37.84%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of salt	0.68%	6.08%	25.68%	39.19%	29.05%
I avoid purchasing food & drinks with high amounts of sugar	0.00%	4.73%	22.97%	43.92%	28.38%
I am concerned about the nutritional content of my food	0.00%	1.35%	10.14%	45.95%	42.57%
I am concerned about the use of pesticides to produce my food	0.00%	1.35%	10.81%	49.32%	38.51%
I am concerned about the use of additives, preservatives and artificial colours in my food	0.00%	0.68%	13.51%	38.51%	47.30%
I am concerned about bacterial contamination of my food	0.00%	1.35%	4.73%	40.54%	53.38%
I am concerned about heavy metals or toxic chemicals	0.00%	0.68%	13.51%	42.57%	43.24%
I am concerned about the accuracy of information on food labels and food displays	0.00%	1.35%	12.16%	50.00%	36.49%

**Table A5.** Share (%) of respondents indicating each level of agreement to the statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns in Son La City, Vietnam.

<b>Statements about diet, nutrition and food concerns</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Diet and nutrition play a major role in my health and the health of my family	0.00%	0.66%	7.28%	41.06%	50.99%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of fat or cholesterol	0.00%	1.32%	17.22%	43.71%	37.75%
I avoid purchasing food containing high amounts of salt	0.66%	5.96%	29.80%	36.43%	27.15%
I avoid purchasing food & drinks with high amounts of sugar	0.66%	5.96%	27.15%	39.74%	26.49%
I am concerned about the nutritional content of my food	0.00%	0.00%	4.64%	46.36%	49.01%
I am concerned about the use of pesticides to produce my food	0.00%	0.00%	5.96%	36.42%	57.62%
I am concerned about the use of additives, preservatives and artificial colours in my food	0.00%	0.00%	3.97%	37.09%	58.94%
I am concerned about bacterial contamination of my food	0.00%	0.00%	6.62%	34.44%	58.94%
I am concerned about heavy metals or toxic chemicals	0.00%	0.66%	7.28%	41.06%	50.99%
I am concerned about the accuracy of information on food labels and food displays	0.00%	1.32%	9.27%	51.66%	37.75%