



The Centre for Global Food and Resources

## The Vietnam urban food consumption and expenditure study

### Factsheet 1: Introduction – What are we doing and why are we doing it?

#### Vietnam – a country in transition

Vietnam is a country in transition. The population now exceeds 90 million and people are increasingly living in urban areas. Food purchase and consumption patterns are also changing. Food safety is a growing concern for consumers and there is anecdotal evidence indicating growing consumer demand for certifications schemes that guarantee product safety and production methods e.g. “certified safe” vegetables and “certified organic”). Urban centres in Vietnam now offer a number of retail outlets for consumers to choose from when buying produce, including traditional outlets such as wet markets, and modern options such as supermarkets.

To provide insights into urban Vietnamese households’ food purchase and consumption behaviours and changing consumer preferences, a team of researchers, led by [Professor Wendy Umberger](#), from [The Centre for Global Food and Resources](#) at The University of Adelaide, has conducted a consumer survey in urban areas across Vietnam. The survey was implemented in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Lao Cai City and Son La City (Figure 1) in December 2016 to March 2017. This work has been conducted in partnership with Vietnamese institutions including: the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU), Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD), the Vietnamese National University of Agriculture (VNUA), and the Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute (FAVRI). The project was funded by the [Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research \(ACIAR\)](#), through two projects AGB/2015/029 and AGB/2012/059,

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#### Why would ACIAR fund this research?

There are many research-for-development (R4D) projects underway in Vietnam. Many of these projects address farming system, post-harvest and market issues facing smallholders. They aim to improve the profitability and livelihoods of smallholders by improving their market access and competitiveness in regional and domestic markets. This study was designed to support these various R4D projects, each requiring specific information on food demand and consumption patterns, consumer attitudes and food values, as well as food market dynamics.

Thus, this study obtained information about household consumption patterns, expenditure on foods, ascertaining the relative importance and value of varieties, attributes and information (e.g. provenance or safety certification), diet quality and characteristics of market segments, which may offer profitable and sustainable opportunities for smallholders producing beef, fruit and vegetable products. In particular, the survey information is being disseminated for use by ACIAR partner projects on temperate fruit, vegetables, tropical fruits and beef.

#### What differentiates this data from existing data?

Government agencies in Vietnam, as well as other countries in the region, publish data allowing per capita consumption of major food products to be calculated. Some of these

studies are based on household surveys, designed to gather data to understand changes in standard-of-living and consumption trends. These studies are generally conducted and released in publications by statistical agencies (e.g. General Statistics Office of Vietnam). Other publically available studies, which provide household-level food consumption data, are conducted by government health departments or agencies focused on obtaining household health status and information on food security. In most countries the latter of these studies are not conducted regularly.

An additional source of per capita consumption or utilisation of specific food products is from 'food balance sheets' for countries. Food balance sheets typically provide information on the quantity of food available (supplies based on official production and trade estimates) and where the food is utilised, including non-food use, losses from storage and transportation and official trade estimates.

Unfortunately, these data sets tend to have issues that affect their usefulness. For example, they may be based on estimates of

existing stocks, production, population and officially reported trade data. Furthermore, it does not provide information about purchases and consumption of food-away-from home (FAFH), or information about *individual* members of the household. The individual level information is important to understand if gender, age, employment etc. affect consumption patterns and diet quality.

### About our factsheets

Over the coming months we will be analysing the data collected from the surveys. As we develop an understanding of our data and results we will share our findings with you through a series of factsheets. Please follow our factsheet releases if you would like to stay informed about our survey results and the explanations and implications we see in them. The factsheets will be posted on our project website:

[www.adelaide.edu.au/global-food/research/international-development/vietnam-consumer-survey](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/global-food/research/international-development/vietnam-consumer-survey).



**Figure 1.** Map of Vietnam indicating the survey locations.

More information	Acknowledgements
<p>Professor Wendy Umberger, The Centre for Global Food and Resources, The University of Adelaide.            Email: <a href="mailto:wendy.umberger@adelaide.edu.au">wendy.umberger@adelaide.edu.au</a>            Website: <a href="http://www.adelaide.edu.au/global-food/research/international-development/vietnam-consumer-survey">www.adelaide.edu.au/global-food/research/international-development/vietnam-consumer-survey</a></p>	<p>Funding for this research was provided by: The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) through projects: AGB/2015/029 and AGB/2012/059, and The Centre for Global Food and Resources at The University of Adelaide.</p> <p>We thank the following Institutions for their in-kind support: Vietnam Women's Union, Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam National University of Agriculture and Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute.</p>