



# people's panel



## People's Panel survey - Food Grading

June 2015

---

# 1 Table of contents

1	Table of contents.....	2
2	Key findings .....	3
3	Background.....	5
3.1	Survey background.....	5
3.2	About the People’s Panel .....	5
3.3	Methodology .....	6
4	Survey results .....	7
4.1	Food places in Auckland.....	7
4.2	The current food grading system .....	13
4.3	Using food grading certificates.....	18
4.4	Changes to the food grade certificate system.....	26
4.5	Alternative food grade certificate options.....	31
	Additional comments .....	36
Appendix	Respondent profile .....	38

## 2 Key findings

### Key findings

#### Food places in Auckland:

- Many panellists said they had eaten from a café (75%), small local takeaway place (68%), restaurant (65%), bakery (56%), large takeaway chain (47%), food court (38%), and/or bar (24%) in the last month.
- 5% dine out or purchase food from food places in Auckland every day, 27% do so every two or three days, and 39% weekly.
- While most panellists (71%) had not seen or experienced any of the poor food hygiene situations mentioned, 12% had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee, and/or had seen a food place that looked very unclean.
- Among those who had a bad food experience, 57% decided not to dine or purchase from the place again in future and 25% decided not to dine or purchase from the place at the time. 22% reported the matter to the owner or a staff member.
- 17% of those who had a bad food experience said they witnessed poor practice from staff, and 13% said the premises were poorly maintained, dirty, or smelly.

#### The current food grading system:

- 78% were aware of all, or most of the way the food grading system works in Auckland.
- 96% were aware of the food grading certificates displayed in food outlets.
- 93% were aware that all food places need to clearly display their food grading certificate at all times.
- 84% knew what the A-E grades on food grading certificates mean.
- Among those who know what the A-E grades mean, nearly half saw it explained in the media (46%), and over a third (36%) said they saw the grades on the certificate and worked it out themselves.
- To improve public understanding of the food grading system, 64% said there should be an online search function that allows you to look up the food safety grade of a food place, 45% said there should be a media release sent out on the worst food places to eat, while others felt there should be more information on food grade certificates, at food places, via a mobile phone app and/or available on the Auckland Council website.

#### Using food grading certificates:

- 82% thought the current food grading system was useful for customers, with 57% saying it was very useful.
- To improve the current food grading system, 18% said the certificates needed to be placed in more prominent positions, suggesting a compulsory, standardised location, 18% said they needed more information on the system, 13% said there needed to be more information on the certificates, and 10% said that the current

system was good, and that it should be kept simple.

- 57% said they always or often look for a food grade certificate when deciding to visit a food place, and around a fifth (21%) said they sometimes checked.
- 97% would dine or purchase from a food place with an A grade food safety rating, and 46% would from one with a B grade, but 92% would *not* dine from one with an E grade.
- 61% might dine or purchase from a food business that was not displaying their food grade certificate.
- 17% said they tended to make their own judgements about food places, based on experience, the situation, and whether it looks clean, and don't solely rely on the grading, 12% said they look or ask for the food grade certificate, and 11% said it needed to be displayed in a standard location where it could be easily seen.

#### **Changes to the food grade certificate system:**

- 96% believe a food grade certificate system should continue to operate, and 90% strongly agree that all food places should clearly display their certificate.
- 33% said a pass-fail system needed to be implemented, 18% mentioned regulation and monitoring, and 13% mentioned industry certification and government direction.

#### **Alternative food grade certificate options:**

- The current letter grade option was the most popular, with 69% saying they preferred it to the other options. 19% preferred the phrases option, 18% the number grade option, and 17% the star rating option.
- 96% thought the date the grade was issued should be displayed on the certificate, and most also said the certificate should contain information about the business, the name of the owner / operator, how often the business will be inspected, and where the grade sits within the range.
- 15% said the alternative food grade certificate options must be simple, clear, and not cluttered with extra information, and 14% said that the current certificate was good, less confusing, and that there was no need to change.

## **3 Background**

### **3.1 Survey background**

The government is introducing a new food act in March 2016. This food act does not include a food grading system and Auckland Council has been asked to advise on what a suitable grading system would be.

Therefore, the council is looking to capture Auckland residents' views on the current food grading system in Auckland, as well as alternative options.

In particular, they are looking for feedback to inform their suggestions on what a suitable grading system would be. They wish to understand experiences dining out and getting takeaways, and gauge opinions on how food grades are currently displayed for customers, and on some alternative food grading systems that could be used.

The following report summarises the key results and comments identified in the survey.

### **3.2 About the People's Panel**

The People's Panel aims to provide an opportunity for Aucklanders to get involved with a range of council issues, giving feedback by regularly completing online surveys and getting involved with focus groups and other activities as needed.

The panel ideally supplements other research, consultation and engagement activities used to provide public perceptions to help inform decision-making processes. Panellists are recruited to be 'typical' members of the public – that is they include members of the public who come from a range of backgrounds and a range of levels of involvement with the council.

At the time of surveying there were over 20,000 people registered with the panel, with representation from residents of each local board area and by age group and ethnicity. The People's Panel is not yet representative of the wider Auckland population and ongoing recruitment is conducted to improve participation from particular areas, age groups and ethnicities.

For more information about the People's Panel visit  
[www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/peoplespanel](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/peoplespanel)

### **3.3 Methodology**

The survey was open from 29 May 2015 to 15 June 2015 and one reminder was sent to those who had not responded. In total 5,040 completed surveys were received.

The feedback has been analysed in two ways:

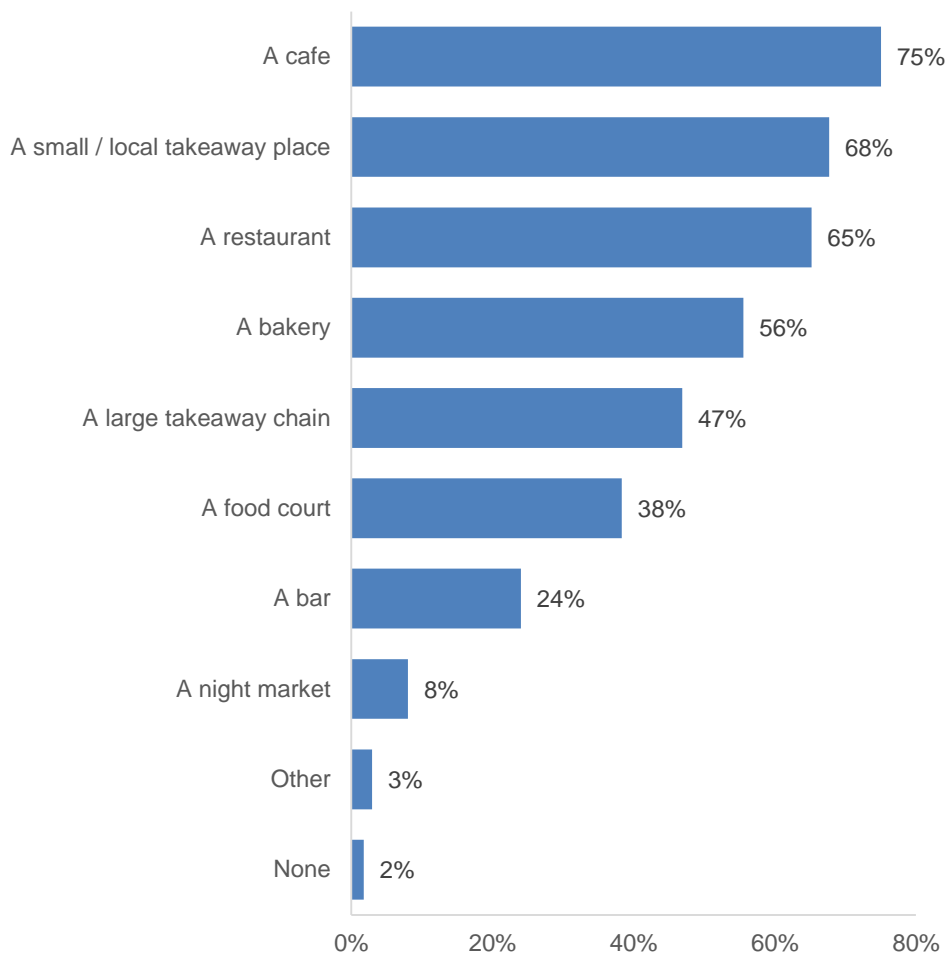
- For the tick box questions, responses to each option have been reported as proportions of the total sample and presented as charts (and tables in the appendix).
- Responses to open-ended questions ranged from one-word answers to lengthy comments with several points and ideas. Key themes from these comments have been identified and ordered by frequency. A selection of comments has been included in the report, to illustrate these themes. Note that in some cases a random sample of 500 comments only has been coded, due to the volume of feedback received.

Results in charts and tables presented in this report may not sum to 100% because multiple responses were allowed for some questions and/or as a result of rounding.

## 4 Survey results

### 4.1 Food places in Auckland

#### Q1A. In the last month, which of these food places have you eaten from?

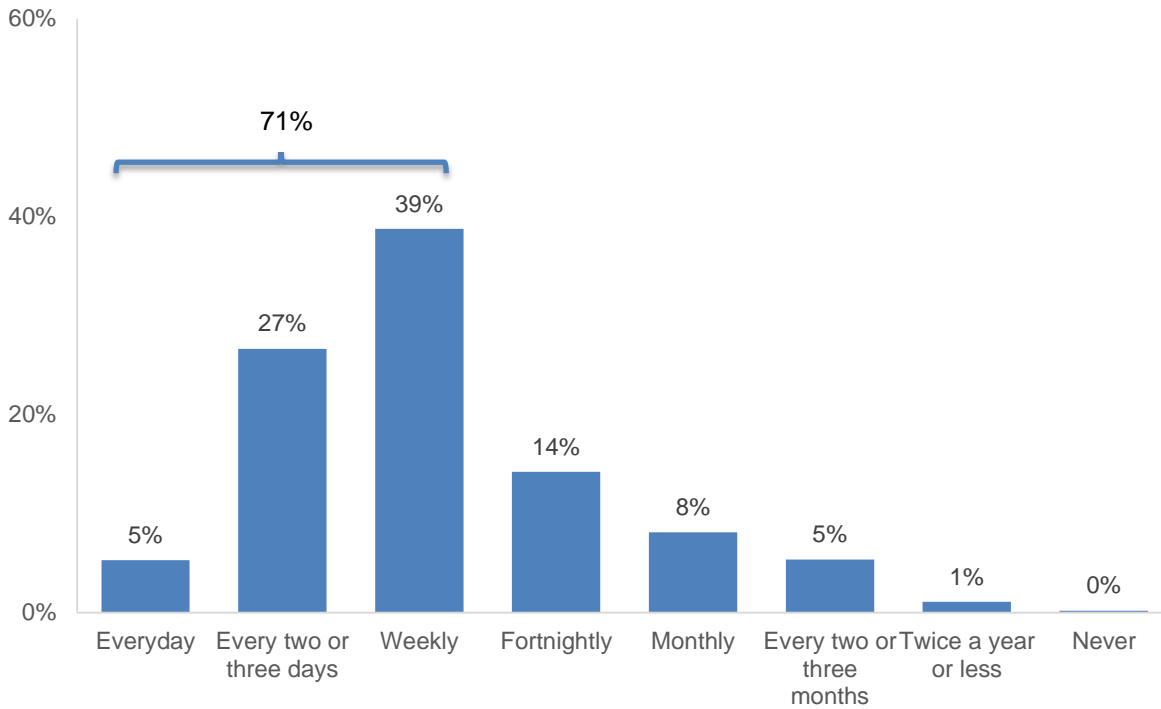


*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.*

Panellists were asked which food places they had eaten from in the last month. Many said they had eaten from a café (75%), small local takeaway place (68%), restaurant (65%), and/or bakery (56%) in the last month, and some said they had eaten from a large takeaway chain (47%), food court (38%), and/or bar (24%).

In general, younger panellists were more likely to have eaten from food places than older panellists.

**Q1B. Approximately, how often do you dine out or purchase food from food places in Auckland?**



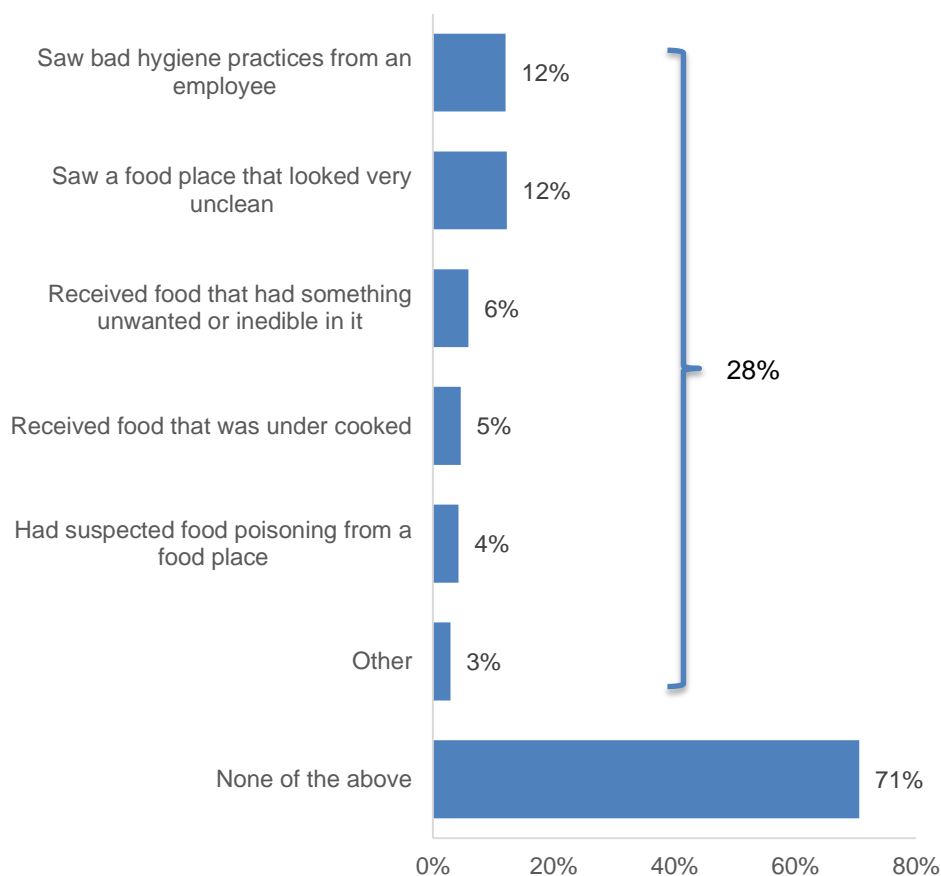
*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.*

A few panellists (5%) dine out or purchase food from food places in Auckland every day, and 71% do so at least weekly.

In general, younger panellists were more likely to dine out or purchase takeaways at least weekly, while those in Waitemata local board were more likely to do so at least every three days (47%).



## Q2A. In the last 3 months, have you seen or experienced the following at food places in Auckland?



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.

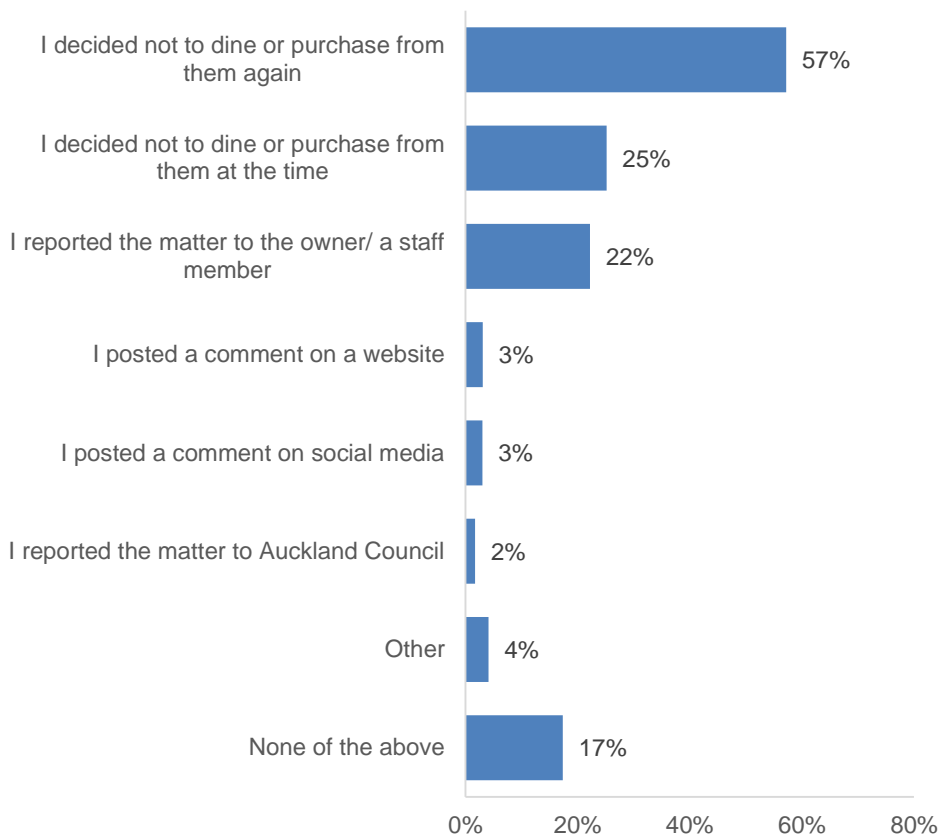
While most panellists (71%) had not seen or experienced any of the mentioned situations, some (12%) had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee, and/or had seen a food place that looked very unclean.

Those who dine out or purchase food from food places at least every three days were more likely to have seen or experienced all of the mentioned situations, apart from receiving food that was undercooked.

In general, younger panellists were more likely to have experienced the mentioned situations than older panellists. Māori and Pacific panellists were also more likely to have experienced all of the poor food hygiene situations, apart from suspected food poisoning.

Those living in Ōtara-Papatoetoe were more likely to have seen a food place that looked very unclean (25%), to have received food that had something unwanted or inedible in it (17%), or that was under cooked (13%).

## Q2B. Did you do any of the following when you had the bad food experience(s)?



*Base: Panellists who had a bad food experience n=1318. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.*

Among those who did have a bad food experience, over half (57%) decided not to dine or purchase food from the place again, and a quarter (25%) decided not to dine or purchase from the place at the time. Just under a quarter (22%) reported the matter to the owner or a staff member.

Those who had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee (64%) or had suspected food poisoning from a food place (71%) were more likely to decide not to dine or purchase from the food place again. Those who had seen a food place that looked very unclean were more likely to decide not to dine or purchase from them again (65%) or at the time (65%).

Those who had received food that had something unwanted or inedible in it (35%) or that was under cooked (47%) were more likely to report the matter to the owner or staff member.

## Q2C. Do you have any comments about the bad food experience(s) you had?

Among those who did have a bad food experience, around a fifth said they witnessed poor practice from staff (17%). A few said the premises were poorly maintained, dirty, and/or smelly (13%).

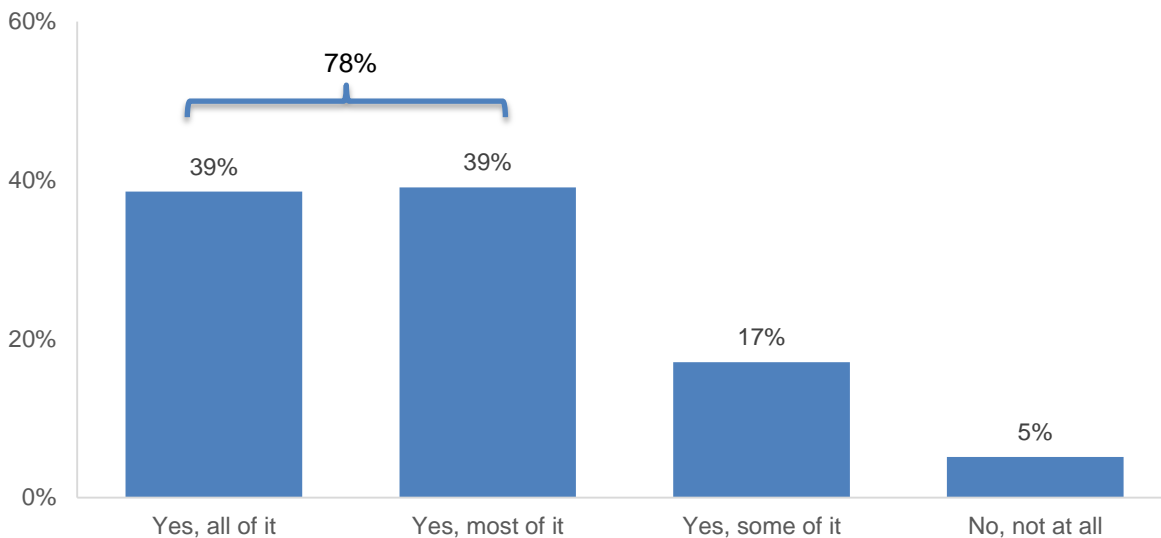
Do you have any comments about the bad food experience(s) you had?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
Witnessed poor practice from staff	96	17%
Premises were poorly maintained / dirty / smelly	73	13%
Found contaminants in food - plastic, hair, glass, insect	55	9%
Made my own judgement / didn't eat there / didn't return	53	9%
Food was not sold at the correct temperature / cooked properly	52	9%
Hygiene concerns regarding handling food and money	45	8%
Ate somewhere then was unwell	45	8%
Comments about particular establishments	41	7%
Wasn't taken seriously / couldn't prove anything	28	5%
Food was - old, cooked in old oil, smelt, not fresh, uncovered	26	4%
More stringent monitoring required / shut down D&Es	25	4%
Received a replacement / refund	16	3%
I reported an issue / received no response or apology	15	3%
It wasn't too bad / minor issue / doesn't happen often	13	2%
Certificate wasn't on display	11	2%
Rating didn't match the experience / premises	11	2%
I reported issue / received apology or action	11	2%
I have stopped complaining / nothing ever done	10	2%
I always look for the rating first	9	2%
Staff need better training on what's acceptable practice	9	2%
Depends on the overall presentation - customer service, etc	8	1%
Owner didn't understand English / what's acceptable	8	1%
I was just generally disappointed / too many issues to list	8	1%
Problem was with clean looking place / upmarket / unexpected	6	1%
Had trouble contacting authorities	5	1%
Ratings must include personal hygiene, cleanliness of premises	4	1%
Include Supermarkets / issues with Supermarkets	4	1%
Concerns regarding birds in premises	4	1%
Council was helpful / practices are improving	4	1%
I prefer to cook my own food now	3	1%
Other	36	6%
No comment	27	5%

## Selection of comments

- *“Food service people often touch money and other dirty things and then either touch food or touch glasses, cups, or cutlery on the area where people will put their mouths. Or else cups are placed rim-down on dirty services etc.”*
- *“Noticed bad hygiene - lack of gloves being worn when preparing food, using same implements for meat and fish, not washing hands after coughing.”*
- *“I saw a member of staff at a food court eatery combing her hair and tying it up over the food displays, and saw a hair falling into a curry. The woman pretended not to understand when I pointed it out, then said she couldn't see it. There were no other staff member in evidence to discuss it with so I left.”*
- *“Inappropriate dress for cooking and handling food. Sneezing scratching heads and coughing in the vicinity of cooking or preparing food. Also saw person returning from toilet without washing hands back to his food bar.”*
- *“I found an order pad one of the waitresses had left on top of the cistern in the toilet. I was horrified she had taken it with her. I immediately showed the manager what I had found.”*
- *“I thought the whole of the Northcote shopping centre was unclean littered and in some places smelly. I would only buy food from Countdown.”*
- *“Premises which looked grubby, untidy and staff not well presented.”*
- *“I've noticed in lots of small, local food outlets that while the kitchen area looks clean, the waiting area and tables are filthy - grubby tables, old food-stained magazines, dirty floors etc. I don't know if the hygiene rating applies only to the kitchen or to all of the premises?”*
- *“There are a number of small businesses around which look grubby and have no food rating displayed. I will not purchase from them.”*
- *“Restaurant shared a bathroom with multiple venues. None of the venues seemed to take responsibility for the bathroom, it was therefore absolutely filthy and disgusting.”*

## 4.2 The current food grading system

### Q3A. Before this survey, were you aware of the general way the food grading system works in Auckland?



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.

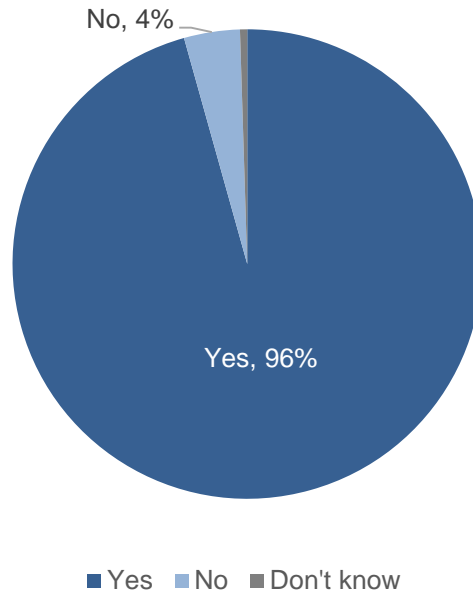
Panellists were asked if they were aware of the general way the food grading system works in Auckland. Three quarters (78%) were aware of all or most of it and 17% were aware of some of it. However, 5% said they were not at all aware of the general way the food grading system works in Auckland.

Unsurprisingly, those who dine out or purchase food less often were less aware of the general way the food grading system works, particularly those who had not dined out or purchased takeaways in the last month (14% were not at all aware).

Those who were aware of the food grading certificates that food places display were more likely to be aware of the general way the food grading system works in Auckland (81% mostly or completely aware).

In general, younger panellists were more likely to be aware of the way it works in Auckland than older panellists.

**Q3B. Before this survey, were you aware of the food grading certificates that food places display?**



*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.*

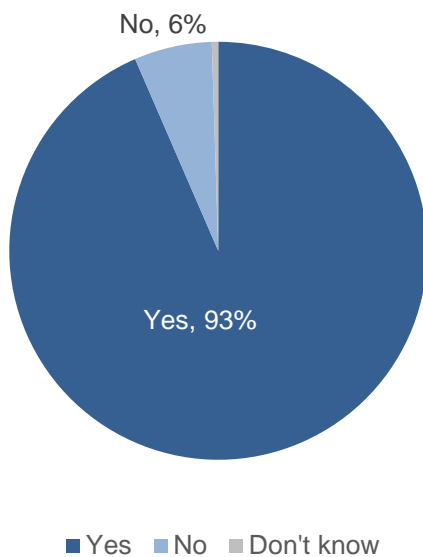
Almost all panellists were aware of the food grading certificates that food places display (96%).

Similar to above, those who dine out or purchase food less often were less aware of the certificates, particularly those who had not dined out or purchased takeaways in the last month (90%).

Similar to above, those who were mostly or completely aware of the general way the food grading system works were more likely to be aware of the food grading certificates (99%), while those who were not at all aware were less likely (47%).

In general, younger panellists were more likely to be aware of the food grading certificates than older panellists.

**Q3C. Were you aware that all food places need to clearly display their food grading certificate at all times?**

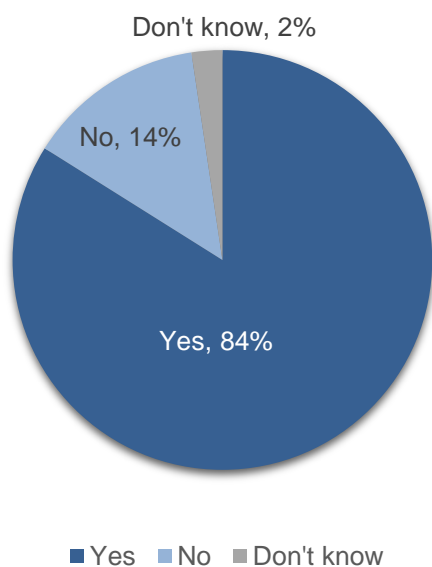


*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4821.*

Likewise, the vast majority of panellists were aware that all food places need to clearly display their food grading certificate at all times (93%).

Those who were mostly or completely aware of the general way the food grading system works were more likely to be aware that all food places need to clearly display their food grading certificate at all times (97%), while those who were not at all aware were less likely (68%).

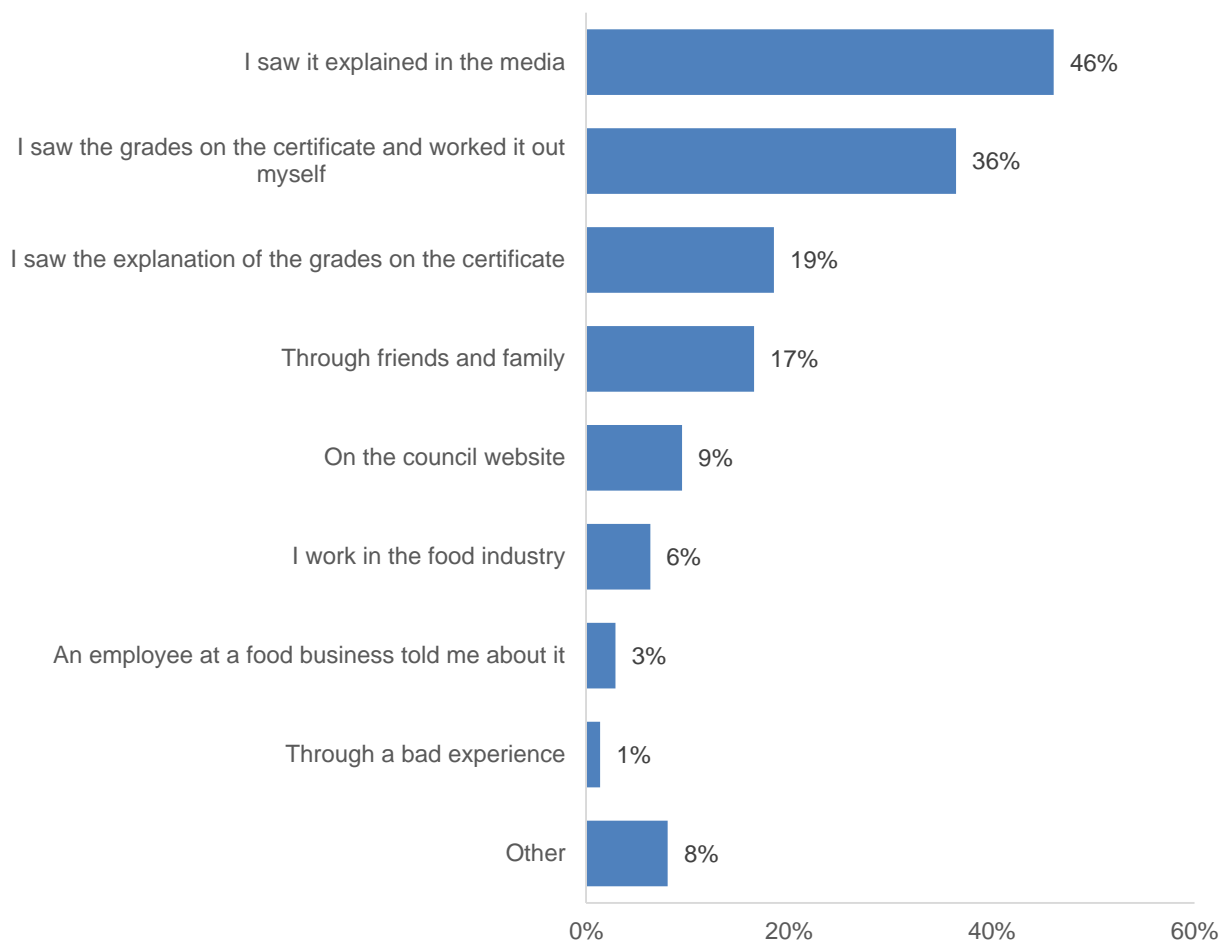
**Q3D. Did you know what the A-E grades on food grading certificates meant?**



*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4821.*

Again, the majority of panellists know what the A-E grades on food grading certificates mean (84%).

### Q3E. How did you find out what the A-E grades meant?



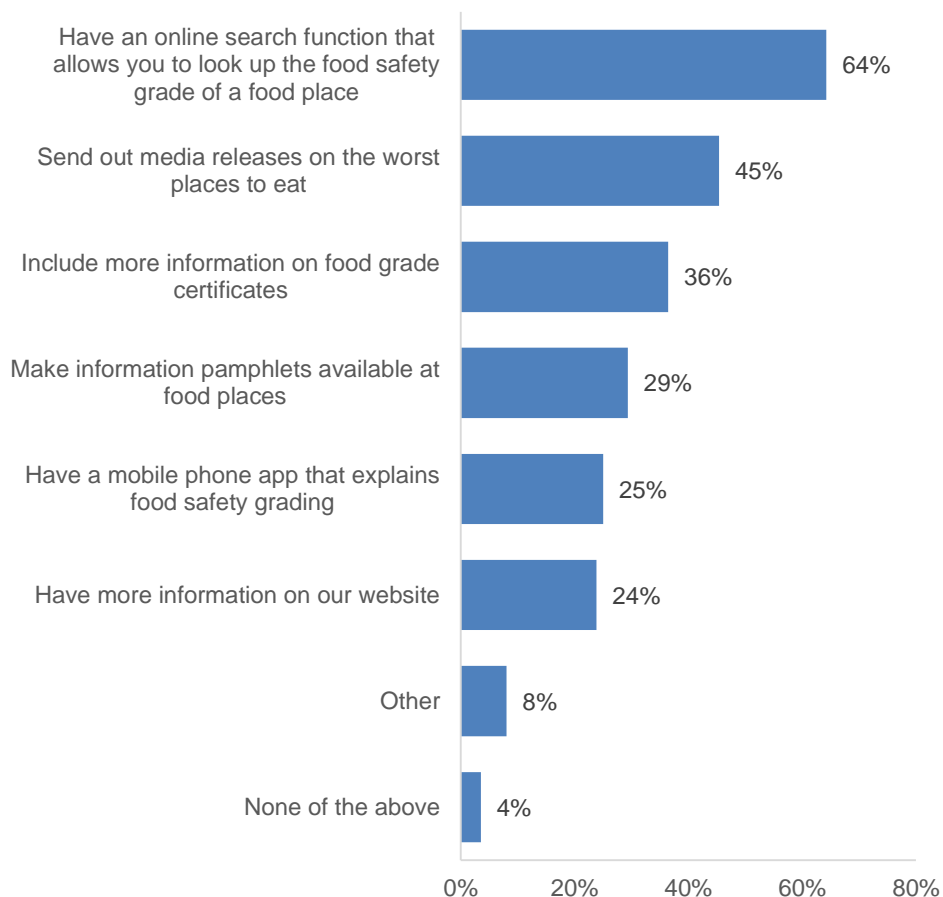
*Base: Panellists who knew what the A-E grades meant n=4046. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.*

Among those who know what the A-E grades mean, nearly half saw it explained in the media (46%), and over a third (36%) said they saw the grades on the certificate and worked it out themselves. Some (19%) said they saw the explanation of the grades on the certificate, and a few (17%) said they found out through friends and family.

In general, older panellists were more likely to have seen the A-E grades explained in the media than younger panellists. Younger panellists were more likely to have seen the grades on the certificate and worked it out themselves (51% of those aged 15 to 24), and/or to have heard about it through friends or family (30% of those aged 15 to 34).



### Q3F. Which of the following do you think we should do to help improve public understanding of the food grading system?



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5039. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.

Panellists were asked what they thought should be done to help improve public understanding of the food grading system. Two thirds (64%) said there should be an online search function that allows you to look up the food safety grade of a food place. Just under half (45%) said there should be a media release sent out on the worst food places to eat, and over a third (36%) said the food grade certificates should include more information.

Interestingly, those who had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee, a food place that looked very unclean, or had received food that had something unwanted or inedible in it were more likely to think there should be a media release sent out on the worst food places to eat (55%, 53%, and 53% respectively), and/or more information included on food grade certificates (45%, 45%, and 44%). Those who had seen a food place that looked very unclean also believed they should have an online search function (69%), and those who had received food that was uncooked, or had suspected food poisoning were more likely to want more information included on certificates (45% and 47%).

Those who were not at all aware of the general way the food grading system works were more likely to say more information pamphlets should be made available at food places

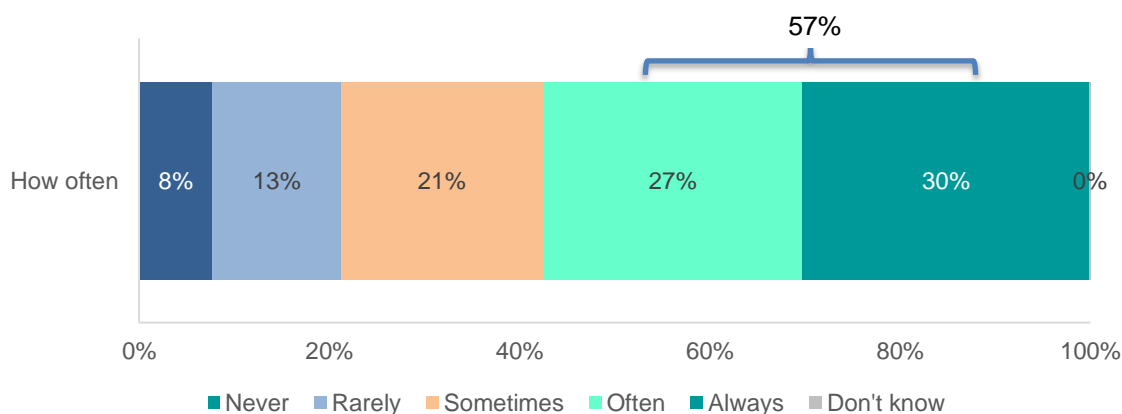
(39%), and less likely to think there should be an online search function (56%), as were those who were not aware of the food grading certificate (38% and 54%).

Older panellists were more likely to think a media release should be sent out on the worst food places to eat (54% of those 65 and over), or more information pamphlets should be made available at food places (36% of those 65 and over).

Pacific panellists were more likely to think that information pamphlets should be made available at food places (41%), that there should be a mobile phone app that explains food safety grading (39%), and that there should be more information on the website (35%). Māori panellists were also more likely to think there should be a mobile phone app that explains food safety grading (33%). Asian panellists were more likely to think there should be more information on the website (35%), and less likely to think there should be an online search function (56%).

### 4.3 Using food grading certificates

#### Q4A. How often do you look for a food grade certificate when deciding to visit a food place (e.g. a takeaway, café, restaurant, bakery, etc.)?

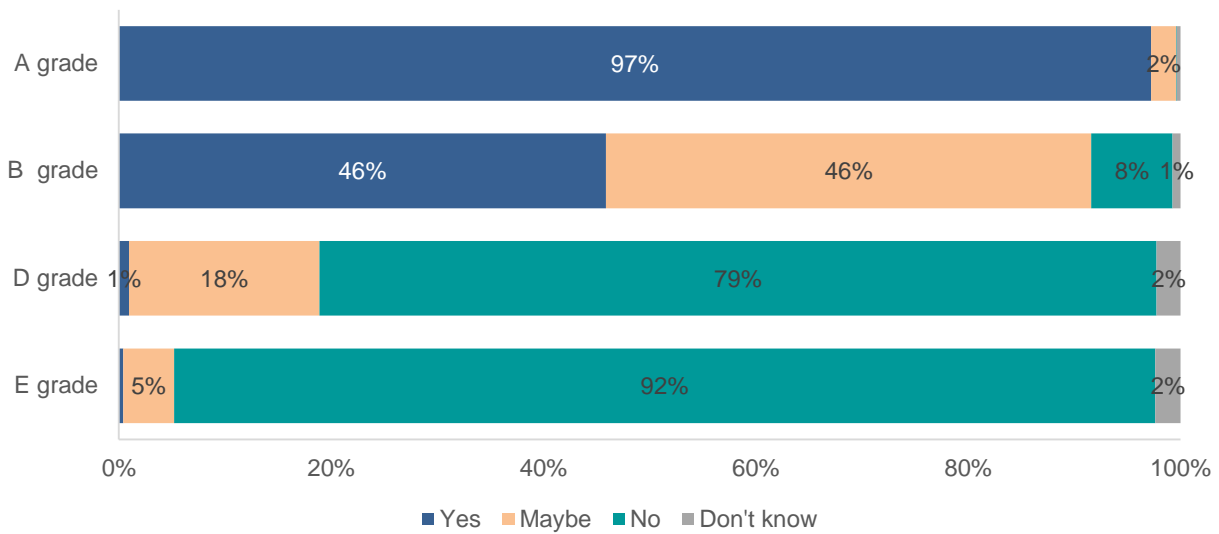


Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.

Panellists were asked how often they looked for a food grade certificate when deciding to visit a food place. Over half (57%) check always or often and around a fifth (21%) said they sometimes checked. Some panellists (13%) said they rarely checked the food grade certificate, and a few (8%) said they never checked.

Māori and Pacific panellists were more likely to say they always look for one (39% and 50%).

### Q4B. Would you dine or purchase from a food place who you saw had the following food safety grades?

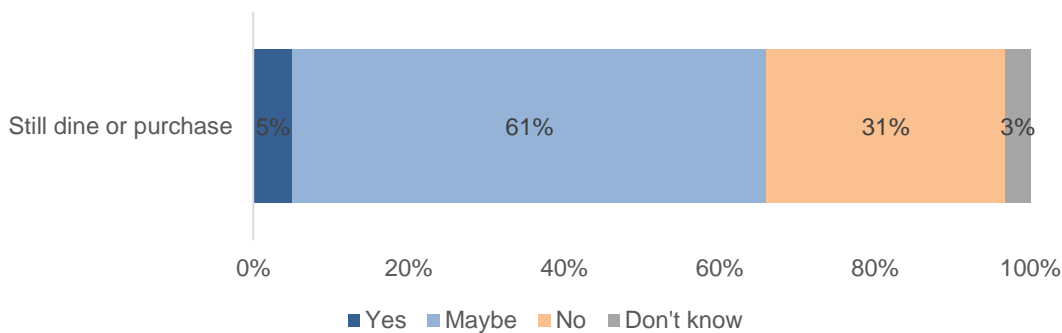


Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.

Almost all panellists would dine or purchase from a food place with an A grade food safety rating (97%). Just under half said they would (46%), or might (46%), dine or purchase from a food place with a B grade, and many (79%) said they would not dine or purchase from one with a D grade. Almost all panellists (92%) would not dine or purchase from a food place with an E grade food safety rating.

In general, older panellists were less likely to dine or purchase food from a food place with a grade lower than A.

**Q4C. If you saw a food business was not displaying their food grade certificate, would you still dine or purchase from them?**



*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.*

Well over half said they might dine or purchase from a food business that was not displaying their food grade certificate (61%), but very few said they definitely would (5%). Nearly a third said they would not dine from a food business that did not display their food grade certificate (31%).

Those who had not dined out or purchased takeaways in the last month were more likely than those who had, to dine or purchase from a food business that was not displaying their food grade certificate (11%), while those who had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee or a food place that looked very unclean were less likely (40% and 38% would not).

Those who were not at all aware of the way the food grading system works, were more likely to dine or purchase from a food business that was not displaying their certificate (14%), as were those who were not aware of the food grading certificates (14%).

Pacific panellists were less likely to dine or purchase from a food business that was not displaying their food grade certificate (42% would not), as were those in Manurewa, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, and Waitākere Ranges (43%, 47%, and 39% would not).

#### Q4D. Do you have any comments about your answers on this page?

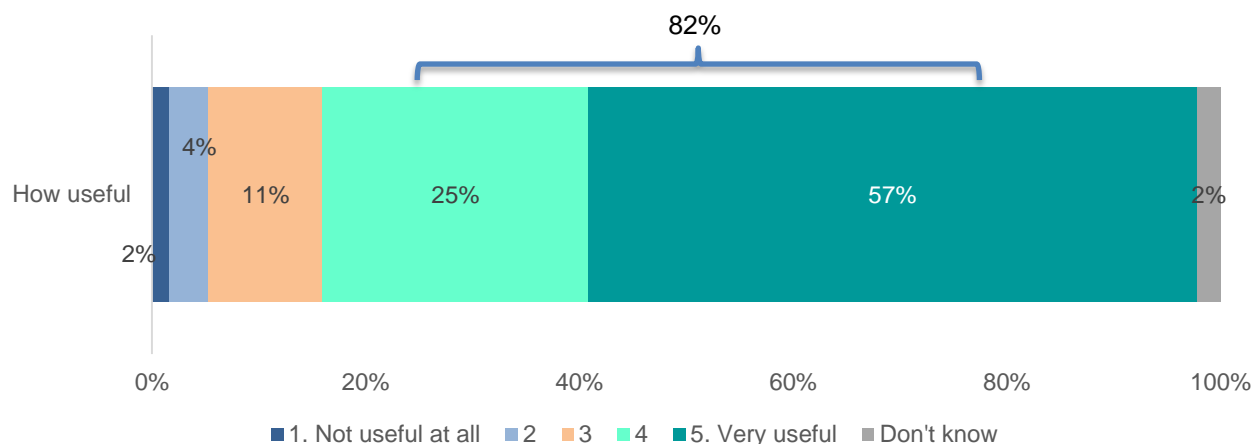
Some said they tended to make their own judgements about food places, based on experience, the situation, and whether it looks clean, and they don't solely rely on the grading (17%). A few said that they look or ask for the food grade certificate (12%), and/or that it needed to be displayed in a standard location where it could be easily seen, such as the front door (11%).

Do you have any comments about your answers on this page?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
Make my own judgement based on - experience, situation, if looks clean, don't rely solely on grading	87	17%
I look for / ask for certificate	58	12%
Need to be displayed in a standard location / easily seen / front door / hard to locate	57	11%
Dependant on - if I'd eaten there before, had no problems, if it was recommended to me, if it was pending	41	8%
Don't check every time / forget to look / didn't know	28	6%
Wouldn't eat at a D or E grade / shouldn't be able to operate / they often don't display them	28	6%
Too many variables - print their own cert, day to day variants, only good for day issued, year too long	25	5%
Council need to take more action / follow new food act / more inspections	24	5%
I rely on food certificates to ensure food safety / If they don't have one I wouldn't eat there / I would report them	23	5%
A' grade or fail / unacceptable / only frequent A Grade	21	4%
Should be mandatory / regulated / there should be consequences / fines	21	4%
Grading is important / public should check	19	4%
This survey has made me aware - will look now	16	3%
Only check when it's somewhere new / or if I have doubts	14	3%
Need an easy to understand grading / more info for public - what to look for, who to contact etc.	14	3%
Depends how hungry / in a hurry / how busy it is	11	2%
Certificates out of date / hard to read the date	9	2%
Doesn't need further explanation / obvious	9	2%
Food stalls / carts / fundraisers don't have certificates / don't notice them	9	2%
Negative feedback - Council too controlling, not one cares	9	2%
Unaware there was no C grade	5	1%
Every place I go to displays them / I only notice A certificates	4	1%
Other	25	5%
No comment/ NA	66	13%

## Selection of comments

- *“Although the grading is important it doesn't influence my decision completely.”*
- *“I am more likely to make a judgement on whether or not to purchase on my own assessment of the food and premises than on a certificate - but seeing a high grade is reassuring”*
- *“I assume that chains and franchised operations would have high grades. If a place looks clean and tidy I would not seek further information generally.”*
- *“I don't really rely on the food grading. I look for the general cleanliness of the premises and prefer places where I can see the food being prepared.”*
- *“I find the certificates very helpful and will ask a proprietor to explain a less than A grade.”*
- *“I know I shouldn't purchase from them if their certificate isn't on display or ask to see it!”*
- *“I would ask a business about their certificate if I couldn't see it on display. I only trust A places, also because some of them are already bad enough I wonder how they got that certificate!!!”*
- *“I would ask the owner where the grading certificate was, and probably report it to the council too.”*
- *“In spite of requirements certificates are not always easy to find. Stick them on the front door!!”*
- *“Many food retailers do not display their certificate in an easily accessible area, therefore it is difficult to make decisions based on the certificate. However one does make choices and decisions based on apparent cleanliness and effectiveness at the time of purchase.”*
- *“A lot of food outlets don't display their grade prominently. There should be more public awareness of this requirement. I also believe some food outlets falsify their grade.”*
- *“Food safety certificates don't seem to be displayed very prominently in food premises. Should they be on main entrance doors, perhaps?”*

### Q5A. How useful do you think the current food grading system is for customers?



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.

When asked how useful they thought the current food grading system was for customers, most panellists said it was useful (82%), with over half saying it was very useful (57%).

Those aware of the way the food grading system works, and/or the food grading certificate, were more likely to say that the current food grading system was useful (87% and 83%), while those who were not at all aware of the way it works, or the food grading certificate, were more likely to think that it was not useful (22% for both).

Those in the Waitākere Ranges area were more likely to think the current food grading system was useful for customers (90%), while those in the Waiheke area were less likely (59%).

## Q5B. From a customer's point of view, can you recommend any improvements to the current food grading system?

When asked to recommend any improvements to the current food grading system, around a fifth said the certificates needed to be placed in more prominent positions, such as windows or front doors, and suggested a compulsory, standardised location (18%). A fifth also said they needed more information on the system, and suggested more advertising, an online searchable resource, and education, with some saying the grade should be shown on the menu (18%). Some said there needed to be more information on the certificates, such as a list of issues, or reasons for fail, as well as their previous grade (13%). A few said that the current system was good, and that it should be kept simple (10%).

From a customer's point of view, can you recommend any improvements to the current food grading system?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
More prominently placed certs - windows, front door, compulsory, standardise location	92	18%
Need more info - advertise more, online searchable resource, educate, on menu	90	18%
More info on certificates / list issues, reasons for fail / previous grade	65	13%
Current system is good / keep it simple	50	10%
Grading inspections need to be regular / ongoing	42	8%
Fines / penalties / restrictions for non-compliance	32	6%
Clear presentation of grade / colour coded / not easy to falsify	31	6%
D and E grade - shouldn't be operating, must show steps that they are improving	31	6%
Date of inspection/expiry displayed clearly	21	4%
Larger certificates / bigger font	18	4%
Grading needs to change / not specific enough/ simplify	15	3%
Staff needs to be continuously educated in - food hygiene, cleanliness, safe storage practices	12	2%
Don't know / don't know enough about grading	7	1%
Why no C grade?	7	1%
Only A grade should be allowed to operate	7	1%
An easy way to make a complaint	6	1%
More transparency / consistency	5	1%
Per previous answer	3	1%
It is not that important to me	3	1%
Other	13	3%
No comment/ NA	61	12%

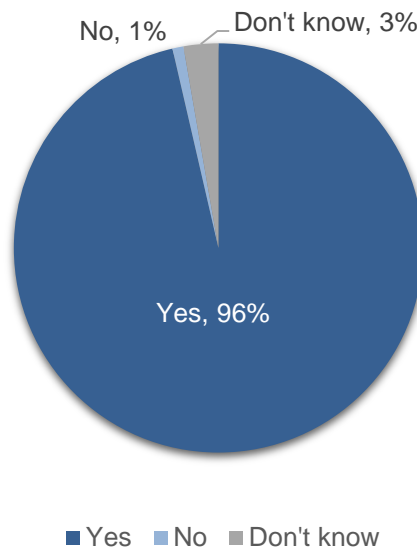


## Selection of comments

- *“The certificate or grading should be displayed on either the menu or front door or window.”*
- *“Certificates should be put on the front window so a customer can make the decision to enter or not.”*
- *“Food grade certificates to be displayed in a clearly visible place at the entrance of an establishment.”*
- *“Have a standardised place where the certificate needs to be so that it is in the same place at all food places.”*
- *“More regular inspections. Consistency in where the signs are displayed. Heavy fines for those who have out-of-date signs or who try to hide them (I've seen both of these occurrences). Prominent web address 'for more information' on the food grade signs, that point people to the council's website. More education - via the media, web, etc.”*
- *“Insist that food places display the grading system on their menus.”*
- *“Being aware of the grade before going to eat there. Like having a search facility on the council website. Also a detailed explanation of requirements to be given a certain grade.”*
- *“Customers require more information about what the grades actually mean.”*
- *“On the certificate that must be displayed have the list of ratings and what the criteria are. That would bring to consumers notice if a place was below standard.”*
- *“Have information about the grade printed on the certificate.”*
- *“If a place has a grading below a "B" it should state on the certificate why it failed i.e. what was wrong.”*
- *“The current system is probably okay if you know how it works. I could imagine that most people don't know the system well enough. It is probably very confusing for people with different ethnic background and maybe not good English language knowledge. It might be good to have a QR code on the display with explanations in several languages.”*
- *“No - I think it works well, as long as you can see an establishment's certificate”*
- *“I like it as it is - perhaps better enforcement of display and placement of certificates to make them more visible would be good.”*
- *“I think the current system is fair, I think more should be done so that they have to be A or B grade to sell goods.”*
- *“No, I think the present grading system is fair and easily understood.”*

#### 4.4 Changes to the food grade certificate system

**Q6A. Do you think that a food grade certificate system should continue to operate for customers?**

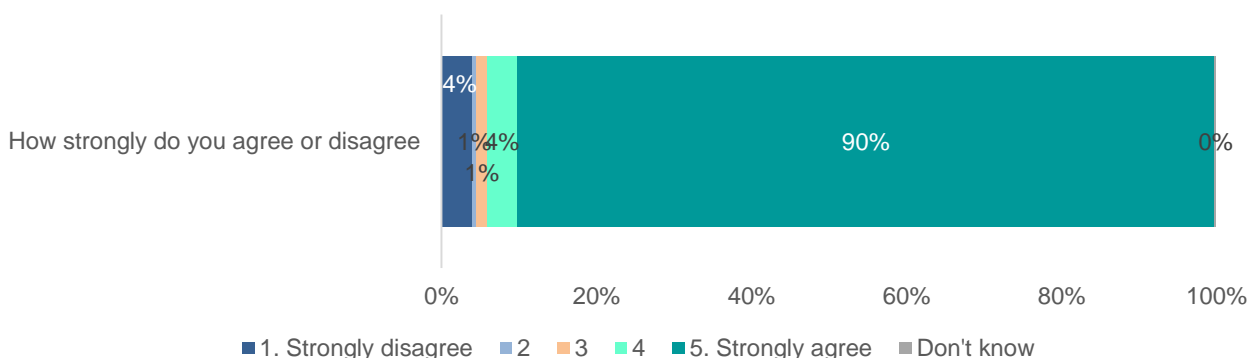


Base: Panellists participating in survey n=5040.

Almost all panellists believe a food grade certificate system should continue to operate for customers (96%).

Those who were not at all aware of the way the food grading system works, and/or the food grading certificate, were less likely to think a food grade certificate system should continue to operate (86% and 87%).

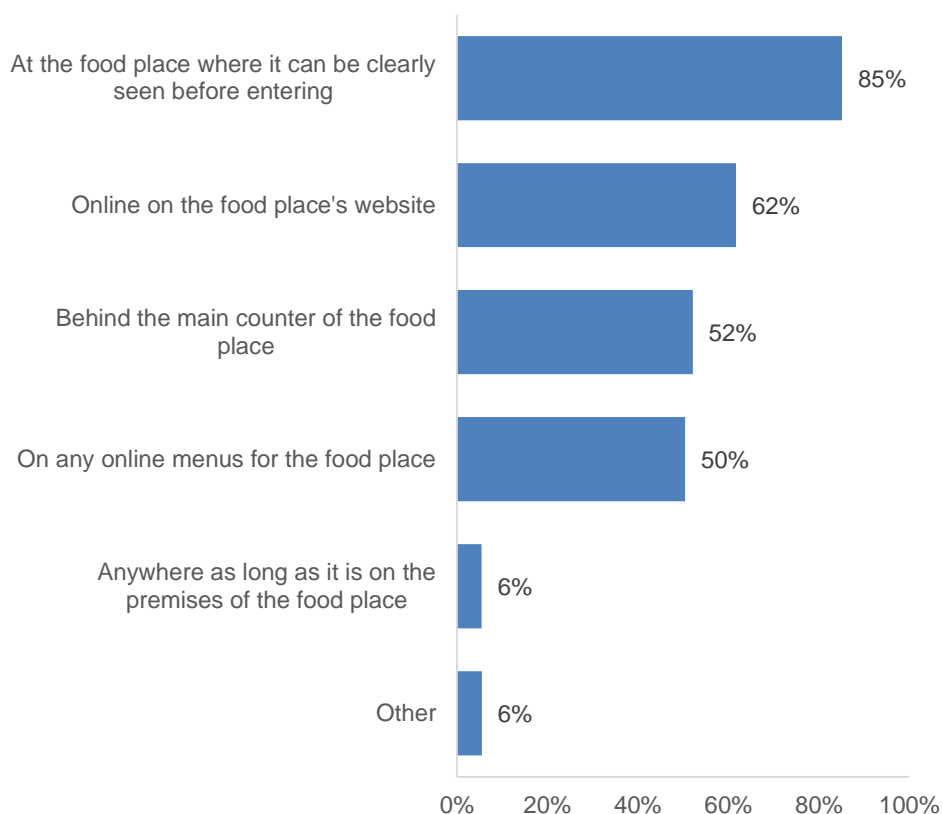
**Q6B. Currently all food businesses must clearly display their food grade certificate...How strongly do you agree or disagree that all food places should clearly display their food grade certificate?**



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4996.

Almost all panellists strongly agree that all food places should clearly display their food grade certificate (90%).

### Q6C. Where do you think food grading certificates should be displayed?



Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4996. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.

When asked where they thought food grading certificates should be displayed, many panellists said at the food place where it can be clearly seen before entering (85%). Just under two thirds said it should be online on the food place's website (62%), and around half said it should be behind the main counter of the food place (52%), and/or on any online menus for the food place (50%).

Those who had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee, or a food place that looked very unclean were more likely to believe the certificate should be displayed where it could be clearly seen before entering (both 91%). Those who had seen bad hygiene practices from an employee, or had suspected food poisoning were more likely to believe the certificate should be displayed on any online menus for the food place (57% and 61%). Those who had suspected food poisoning were also more likely to believe the certificate should be displayed online on the food place's website (75%).

## Q6D. Do you have any comments about your answers on this page?

Panellists were asked if they had any comments about the answers they gave on changing the food grade certificate system. Around a fifth said certificates should be displayed prominently, suggesting a standardised location (22%), or where it can be clearly seen before entering, such as at the entrance (18%).

Do you have any comments about your answers on this page?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
Certificate should be displayed prominently / clearly visible / standardise location	109	22%
Certificate should be displayed at the food place where it can be clearly seen before entering / at the entrance	88	18%
General comments - food grading important, must be displayed, I rely on it	32	6%
Certificate should be displayed behind the main counter of the food place	31	6%
Current system is good / keep it simple / council on the right track	30	6%
Certificate should be displayed at several places	29	6%
Certificate should be displayed online on the food place's website	22	4%
Clear presentation type of grade / colour coded / large enough print / bigger	19	4%
Fines / penalties / restrictions for noncompliance - enforcement, customers should report if cert not displayed	17	3%
D and E grade shouldn't be operating / A or closed	12	2%
More info on certificates - list issues, reasons for fail, a bit of flexibility	12	2%
Grading inspections need to be regular / ongoing / random checks, mystery shoppers	12	2%
Certificate should be displayed on any online menus for the food place, online in general, app	11	2%
Certificate should be displayed anywhere as long as it is on the premises of the food place	10	2%
Date of inspection /expiry / info need to be displayed clearly	10	2%
Need more info - advertise more, educate	10	2%
Per previous answer	9	2%
Have not been aware of food cert previously / will look now	9	2%
Displaying cert online not practical	8	2%
Food stalls / carts / fundraisers don't have certificates	7	1%
Comments regarding survey structure	6	1%
Comments re forgery / dishonesty etc.	6	1%
Make my own judgement based on - experience, situation, if looks clean, don't rely solely on grading	5	1%
Other	14	3%
No comment/ NA	125	25%

## Selection of comments

- *“Food grading certificates should be clearly displayed/visible at a place designated by the appropriate authority (not the food place management).”*
- *“From my perspective, now that I know, I would like to see it in plain view, or in a place where the public can see it.”*
- *“Grading certificates should be clearly visible for the customer so they can make informed choices for them and their families.”*
- *“It would be convenient to have grades displayed where they are easily visible from outside along with the menu.”*
- *“There should be a standard place they are all required to be displayed, e.g. immediately inside the front door.”*
- *“I like to be able to clearly see the grading before I enter somewhere.”*
- *“It must be displayed in a place that customers can see before they actually enter the premises. That way the customer can make an informed choice about whether to eat there or not. Surely this would provide an incentive for restaurants and food places to strive for the best rating?”*
- *“The certificate should be displayed prominently at the front door (or vicinity) to avoid embarrassment for customers who decide not to eat at a food place that has a lower rating after they have already entered the premises.”*

## Q6E. What alternative food grade system would you like to see for customers?

Those who felt the current food grade system should not continue were asked what alternative food grade system they would like to see for customers, but only 39 people gave alternative ideas. A third of those who commented on this question said a pass-fail system needed to be implemented, where A meant open, and an E meant closed, as it was unfit to operate (33%). Some mentioned regulation and monitoring (18%), and a few mentioned industry certification and government direction (13%).

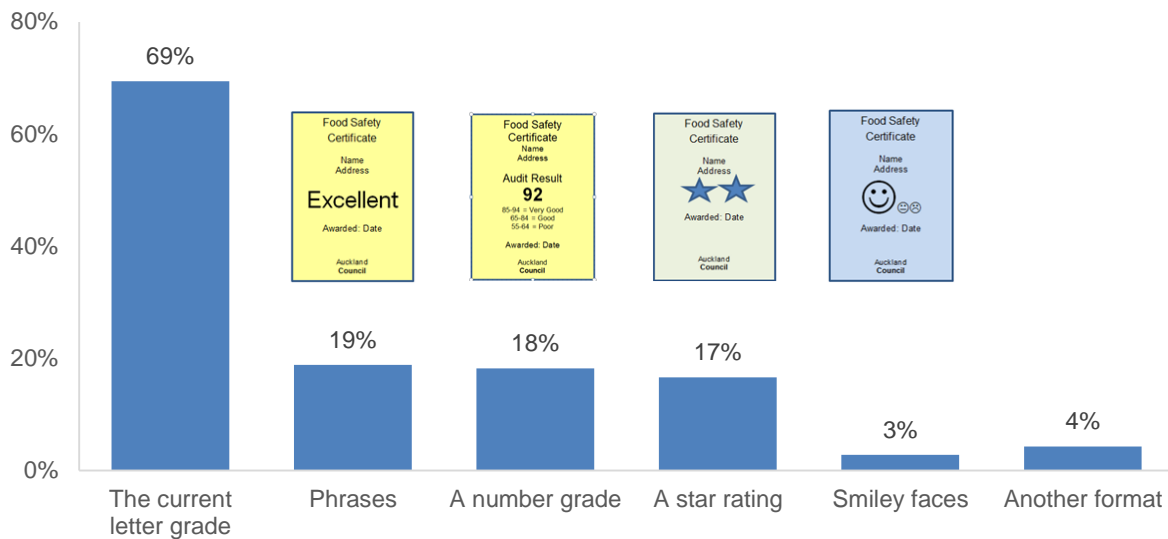
What alternative food grade system would you like to see for customers?	Number of responses n=39	% of responses
A = open, E = unfit /close / pass-fail system	33%	13
Regulated / monitored	18%	7
Industry certification / government directed	13%	5
Random inspections required regularly	10%	4
Improve standards in general / more strict	10%	4
Hygiene / cleanliness	8%	3
Current system works well	8%	3
Other	10%	4
None	13%	5

## Selection of comments

- *“If a place isn't safe to eat at, they should be closed. The customer shouldn't have to walk into a restaurant and wonder if it's safe to eat there.”*
- *“Either the food is prepared safely or it isn't. If it is, different grades are irrelevant. If it isn't the people should be prosecuted. The Council should have a small number of inspectors who check on places randomly.”*
- *“Just because there is a grade does not mean it is regularly monitored and places still practice bad food hygiene.”*
- *“Most important for me would be to know that council checks food premises regularly and closes them if necessary, if not compliant.”*
- *“They are either safe or not, and should not be open if they are not safe. So just a pass / fail.”*

## 4.5 Alternative food grade certificate options

**Q7A. Below are some basic examples of what a food grade certificate could look like... Which of these do you prefer?**



*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4996. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.*

Panellists were shown some basic examples of what a food grade certificate could look like, and were asked which they preferred. The current letter grade option seemed to be the most popular, with over two thirds saying they preferred it to the other options (69%). Some said they preferred the phrases option (19%), the number grade option (18%), and/or the star rating option (17%).

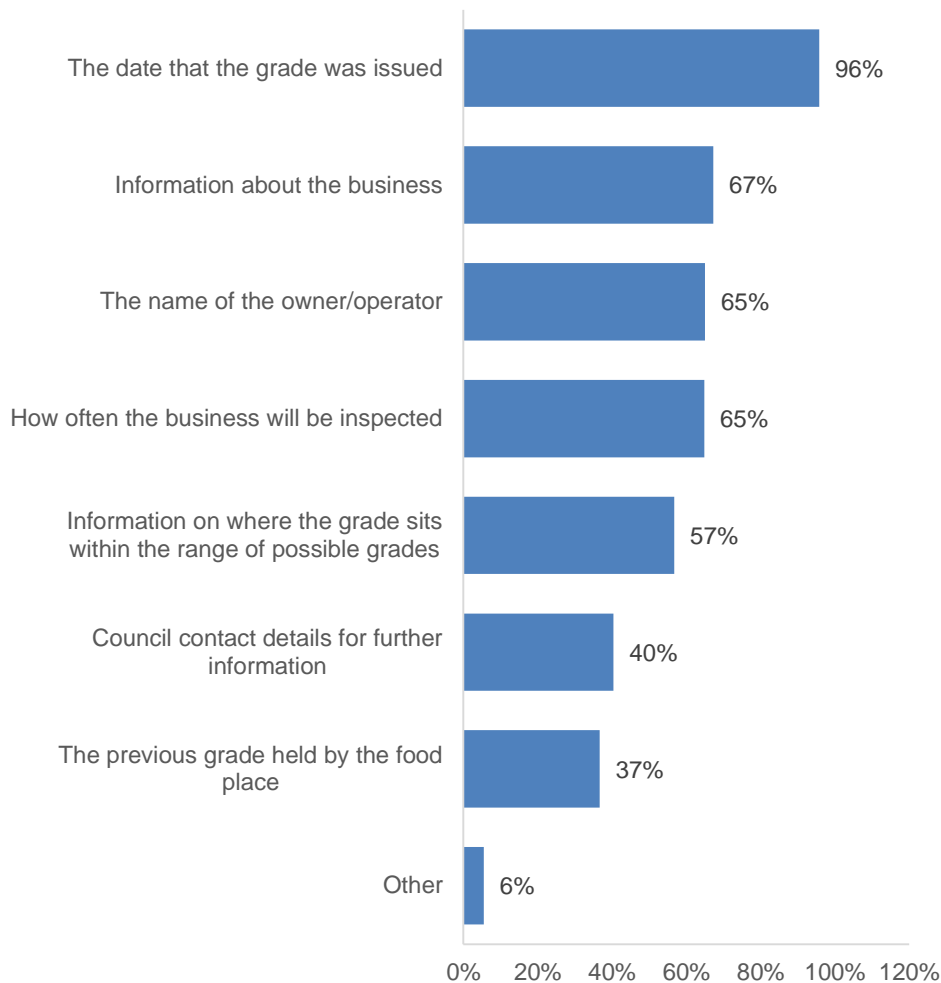
Interestingly, those who had not dined out or purchased takeaways in the last month were less likely to prefer the current letter grade option (54%).

Those who were mostly or completely aware of the general way the food grading system works were more likely to prefer the current letter grade option (73%), while those who were not at all aware were less likely (45%).

Those who were not aware of the food grading certificates that food places display were more likely to prefer the star rating option (29%), and less likely to prefer the current letter grade option (41%).

Younger panellists were more likely to say they preferred a number grade option (27% of those aged 15 to 34).

## Q7B. What information do you think should be displayed on a food safety certificate?



*Base: Panellists participating in survey n=4996. Multiple responses were allowed, responses add to over 100%.*

When asked what information they thought should be displayed on a food safety certificate, almost all panellists said the date the grade was issued (96%). Around two thirds said information about the business should be on the certificate (67%), as well as the name of the owner / operator (65%), and how often the business will be inspected (65%). Over half said information on where the grade sits within the range of possible grades should be shown (57%).

In general, those who had a bad food experience were more likely to want more information on the food safety certificate.

Those who were not at all aware of the general way the food grading system works were more likely to want information on where the grade sits within the range of possible grades (67%), and less likely to want Information about the business (58%) or the date the grade was issued (91%). Those who were not aware of the food grading certificates were also more likely information on where the grade sits within the range of possible grades (70%).



In general, younger panellists were more likely to think the previous grade held by the food place should be displayed on the certificate, and less likely to think the name of the owner operator should be displayed, while older panellists thought the reverse.

### Q7C. Do you have any comments about your answers to the above questions?

Some panellists said food grade certificates must be simple, clear, and not cluttered with extra information, with the actual grade being important (15%). Some also said that the current certificate was good, less confusing, and that there was no need to change. These people also commented on the large letter grading in the current version (14%).

Do you have any comments about your answers to the above questions?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
Must be simple / clear / grade important / not cluttered with extra info	74	15%
Current certificate is good / less confusing / large A / no need to change	71	14%
Contact number for complaints/ website if further detail required/ QR Code	34	7%
Should include previous grades / consistency / history	32	6%
Date of inspection / expiry displayed clearly	30	6%
Explanations for grades / lower grades	30	6%
Grading inspections need to be regular / ongoing / checks on food hygiene vital	24	5%
Need to ensure they cannot be forged	21	4%
Prefer star rating / everyone can understand	18	4%
Dislike smiley faces - trivial, childish	16	3%
Star system confusing as it is used to rate restaurants already	15	3%
Fines /penalties / restrictions for non-compliance / businesses with D or E grade should be shut down	13	3%
Phrases - looks good, speaks for itself	9	2%
Number grade - like it, easy to understand	8	2%
Previous grades should not be relevant to new owners	6	1%
Need more info - advertise more, educate	5	1%
Why no C Grade	4	1%
Colours easier to understand	4	1%
Number grade - 30 too low, why not go up to 100?	3	1%
Other	18	4%
No/ NA	159	32%

#### Selection of comments

- *“I don't think the signs should be too cluttered. Otherwise it will be too confusing. I don't think that anyone looks far beyond the A, B, D or E.”*
- *“Keep it simple and easy for all consumers to read.”*
- *“If the certificate has too much information it won't be read.”*
- *“It doesn't matter how the grades are displayed but rather that we understand the range of available range of grades.”*
- *“Keep it simple, just need to see a letter - you can get any other information*

*(council contact details etc.) elsewhere.”*

- *“Simple grading system, not too complicated. The current one works well, just needs better participation and enforcement. Displayed so you can make an informed choice as a dinner before choosing to dine.”*
- *“Too much information will be confusing. Current grading with letter code is simple and beautiful.”*
- *“Keep it simple, if it's working why change it!”*
- *“I don't see any reason to alter the certificate. The one used now is very clear. Why go to more expense to change something that isn't broken!”*

## Q7D. Is there anything that you require from a food grading system that we haven't covered in this survey?

Over half felt there was nothing else required, or chose not to comment (52%), but a few gave a range of ideas, including more transparency and random inspections.

Is there anything that you require from a food grading system that we haven't covered in this survey?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
More transparency for what is covered - premises, storage, prep area / criteria	35	7%
Random inspections required regularly / take action / more frequent inspections	29	6%
Contact number for Health Department / Council / hotline / website	23	5%
Clarity on threshold for shutting down premises/Premises with D or E grade should be shut down / inform public	23	5%
Date of inspection / expiry displayed clearly / next inspection date	23	5%
Hygiene / cleanliness / all workers should have training	20	4%
Prominent - large, well placed, clear / colour coded	20	4%
Current system is fine	17	3%
Explanation of low grade	16	3%
Grading relating to - sustainability, food source, ingredients, allergens	13	3%
Needs to be comprehensive so is legitimate, can't be forged	11	2%
Good survey / keep up the good work	10	2%
Change of owner / history	8	2%
Audit of inspectors available to public	8	2%
Need more info - advertise more, educate	7	1%
Customer feedback surveys / online forum	6	1%
Food stalls/ carts/ fundraisers don't have certificates	3	1%
Other	18	4%
No/ NA	262	52%

### Selection of comments

- *“As mentioned, more frequent and random inspections would go a long way to improving performance. A requirement for food outlet owners to complete food safety training would support the front line staff.”*
- *“If a food vending premise/operator is not an A, the certificate should list the areas they failed/ were weak at, so a customer can make an informed decision to purchase or not.”*
- *“To inform people about the criteria used to evaluate the businesses.”*
- *“A webpage where the public can complain if they have a bad experience with a business' food safety or hygiene and know that the Council will follow-up with a spot check of that business and/or talk to the business owner.”*
- *“Should be checked every 6 months and the date displayed.”*

## Additional comments

### Q8G. Do you have any other comments to make about food grading systems or this survey?

Do you have any other comments to make about food grading systems or this survey?	Number of responses n=500	% of responses
Current certificate is good / less confusing / large A / no need for changes	82	16%
All outlets should have high standards / rating / important / essential	73	15%
Good survey / keep up the good work	38	8%
Must be regulated / enforced / random visits	38	8%
Outlets should be closed if standards not met / need to be tougher on outlets not complying	28	6%
Need more info - advertise more, educate, more languages	27	5%
Prominent - large, well placed, clear, colour	26	5%
Customer feedback surveys / online forum / app	19	4%
Leniency for fundraisers / schools / churches	11	2%
Keep it simple / concise	9	2%
I'm selective where I eat - have been ill before	8	2%
A country wide standard would be good / linked to other authorities / consistency	8	2%
Reason for grading	7	1%
Some outlets don't match their rating	6	1%
No to star or smiley face rating - not serious enough	6	1%
Comments about particular establishments	6	1%
Food stalls / carts / fundraisers don't have certificates - concerns re hygiene	4	1%
Other	30	6%
No comment	151	30%

...

#### Selection of comments

- *"I am pleased that Council is planning on staying with the certificate system."*
- *"I really like the current system as it is easy to make a decision about eating out or buying take away food."*
- *"I think A to E speaks for itself, as long as it is clearly specified what the grading means on the certificate."*
- *"I think it's a great system, and certainly helps me choose which places I will buy food from, and thus far I have not had food-poisoning from dining out."*
- *"I think the current certificates are excellent, they are simple and self-explanatory!"*
- *"All food outlets should be graded for Public Safety."*
- *"Be tougher. It's not difficult to learn food hygiene and apply safety procedures so there's really no excuse to fail or get anything less than a B. A different grade system may be required for street vendors and food trucks but the overall safety standard shouldn't be lower."*

- *“Food grading is essential. It must be easily understood and publicised from time to time.”*
- *“I think a food grading system is critical for consumers - we have a right to know what standards the places we choose to eat at meet.”*
- *“Imperative to keep a grading system which is on display in ALL food businesses so that high standards of food production and display can be maintained for the good of the public health.”*

## Appendix Respondent profile

	All respondents n=5040	Percentages (%) n=5040	Statistics NZ Percentages (%) 2013 census data
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	3151	63%	51%
Male	1869	37%	49%
Prefer not to say/Unknown	20	0%	
<b>Age</b>			
15-24 years	143	3%	19%
25-34 years	457	9%	18%
35-44 years	897	18%	18%
45-54 years	1072	21%	18%
55-64 years	1053	21%	13%
65-74 years	1019	20%	9%
75+ years	285	6%	6%
Prefer not to say/Unknown	114	2%	
<b>Ethnicity (Multiple response)</b>			
European	4412	88%	56%
Māori	304	6%	10%
Pacific Peoples	202	4%	14%
Asian	375	7%	18%
Middle Eastern, Latin American, African	59	1%	2%
Other	2	0%	1%
Unknown	53	1%	
<b>Local Board</b>			
Albert-Eden	436	9%	7%
Devonport-Takapuna	325	6%	4%
Franklin	221	4%	5%
Great Barrier	6	0%	0.1%
Henderson-Massey	321	6%	8%
Hibiscus and Bays	344	7%	6%
Howick	328	7%	9%
Kaipātiki	337	7%	6%
Mangere-Otahuhu	117	2%	5%
Manurewa	129	3%	6%
Maungakiekie-Tāmaki	225	4%	5%
Orākei	344	7%	6%
Ōtara-Papatoetoe	112	2%	5%
Papakura	83	2%	3%
Puketāpapa	147	3%	4%
Rodney	303	6%	4%
Upper Harbour	160	3%	4%
Waiheke	54	1%	1%
Waitākere Ranges	278	6%	3%
Waitematā	470	9%	6%
Whau	280	6%	5%
Other/Unknown	20	0%	-

*Demographics from People's Panel registration information*