

A decorative graphic is present on the page, featuring a large, thin, light-brown arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the end of this arc, with a small yellow square at the intersection point. Another small yellow square is located at the bottom right corner of a green rectangular area in the top left corner of the page.

# **AARP Bulletin Survey on Rising Food Costs Executive Summary**

June 2008

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Executive Summary  
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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## **Acknowledgements**

AARP collected the data for this project through a telephone survey administered by International Communications Research (ICR). This report was written by Lona Choi-Allum, Research Analyst, AARP Strategic Issues Research. For additional information, please contact Lona Choi-Allum at [lallum@aarp.org](mailto:lallum@aarp.org).

## AARP Bulletin Survey on Rising Food Costs: Executive Summary

The AARP Bulletin commissioned a nationwide survey in June 2008 to find out how consumers 45+ feel about rising food prices and how it has impacted them personally. The survey asked consumers who they think is responsible for rising food prices, and what actions they are taking to cope with rising food prices.

The survey findings indicate that over half of respondents are taking steps to cope with rising food prices. Slightly over half of consumers think that there is a global food shortage. However, less than half of consumers think that certain food items may need to be rationed within the next year. When asked who is responsible for rising food prices, the majority of respondents think that the government is responsible. Below is a summary of the findings.

### Survey Findings

- **Almost half of respondents (49%) believe that food prices have caused a hardship on their budget.** Over three out of five respondents (63%) ages 45 – 49 stated that food prices have caused a hardship on their budget. Respondents ages 45 – 49 (69%) were more likely than the 50+ (49%) to report that they have started cutting back on summer entertaining to cope with rising food prices. In addition, almost four out of five respondents (78%) ages 45 – 49 said that they have started eating out less, compared to over half of those 50+ (54%).
- **Slightly over half of respondents (52%) think that there is a global food shortage.** Respondents ages 50+ (55%) are more likely than those ages 45 – 49 (38%) to think there is a global food shortage. However, the 50+ (39%) are less likely than those ages 45 – 49 (51%) to think that certain food items may need to be rationed within the next year.
- **The majority of respondents (71%) think that the government is responsible for rising food prices.** Two out of five respondents (44%) think that natural disasters play a role in rising food costs. Respondents were less likely to think that restaurants (11%), farmers (16%), grocery stores (28%), or food processing plants (29%) were responsible for these rising costs.
- **Just over half of respondents (53%) do not think it is likely that certain food items may need to be rationed within the next year.** Four out of five (81%) reported that they have not started eating fewer meals in the past six months. However, over half have started using discount coupons at grocery stores (57%) and started buying generic grocery brand items (56%), and one in five (19%) have started eating fewer meals.

## **Survey Methodology**

The study was conducted for AARP via telephone by International Communications Research using its national omnibus survey service. The interviews were conducted from June 4 – June 9, 2008 among a nationally representative sample of 1,009 people ages 45 and older. ICR weighted the data to provide nationally representative estimates of the adult population 45 years of age and older.

**AARP Bulletin Survey on Rising Food Costs  
Annotated Questionnaire  
(n=1,009)**

\*\* denotes <0.5%  
-- denotes 0%

**FC-1 Do you think there is a global food shortage?**

	<b>45 – 49</b>	<b>50+</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Yes</b>	38%	55%	52%
<b>No</b>	48%	37%	40%
<b>Maybe</b>	5%	3%	3%
<b>Don't know</b>	8%	5%	5%
<b>Refused</b>	--	**	**

**FC-2 How likely do you think it is that certain food items may need to be rationed within the next year? Would you say...?**

	<b>45 – 49</b>	<b>50+</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Very likely</b>	19%	17%	18%
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	32%	22%	24%
<b>Not very likely</b>	21%	26%	25%
<b>Not at all likely</b>	25%	29%	28%
<b>Don't know</b>	3%	6%	5%
<b>Refused</b>	--	**	**

**FC-3 As you may have heard, food prices are rising. Who or what do you think is responsible for rising food prices? Do you think...(INSERT ITEM) (are/is) responsible?**

	<b>45 – 49</b>				<b>50+</b>				<b>TOTAL</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
<b>a. Restaurants</b>	9%	89%	2%	--	12%	85%	3%	**	11%	86%	2%	**
<b>b. Grocery stores</b>	32%	67%	1%	--	27%	71%	2%	**	28%	70%	2%	**
<b>c. Farmers</b>	13%	86%	1%	--	16%	81%	2%	**	16%	82%	2%	**
<b>d. Food processing plants</b>	29%	66%	5%	--	29%	64%	7%	**	29%	65%	6%	**
<b>e. Government</b>	75%	16%	8%	--	69%	26%	4%	**	71%	24%	5%	**
<b>f. Natural disasters</b>	38%	61%	1%	--	45%	51%	4%	**	44%	53%	3%	**
<b>g. Climate change</b>	30%	69%	1%	--	38%	57%	5%	**	36%	59%	4%	**

**FC-4 Have food prices caused a hardship for your budget?**

	<b>45 – 49</b>	<b>50+</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Yes</b>	63%	45%	49%
<b>No</b>	33%	52%	48%
<b>Maybe</b>	4%	3%	3%
<b>Don't know</b>	--	**	**
<b>Refused</b>	--	**	**

**FC-5 In the past six months, have you started doing any of the following to cope with rising food prices? Have you...(INSERT ITEM)?**

	<b>45 – 49</b>				<b>50+</b>				<b>TOTAL</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
<b>a. Started using discount coupons at grocery stores</b>	56%	44%	--	--	57%	42%	**	**	57%	43%	**	**
<b>b. Started buying generic brand grocery items</b>	54%	46%	--	--	56%	43%	**	**	56%	44%	**	**
<b>c. Started cutting back on summer entertaining</b>	69%	31%	--	--	49%	50%	1%	**	53%	46%	1%	**
<b>d. Started a vegetable garden</b>	37%	63%	--	--	27%	72%	1%	**	29%	70%	**	**
<b>e. Started eating more fast food "value menu" items</b>	19%	80%	**	--	13%	86%	**	**	15%	85%	**	**
<b>f. Started eating more leftovers</b>	62%	38%	--	--	56%	44%	**	**	57%	43%	**	**
<b>g. Started eating fewer meals</b>	23%	77%	--	--	18%	82%	**	**	19%	81%	**	**
<b>h. Started eating less meat</b>	42%	58%	--	--	41%	59%	**	**	41%	59%	**	**
<b>i. Started eating out less</b>	78%	22%	**	--	54%	46%	**	**	59%	41%	**	**
<b>j. Started shopping for food less frequently</b>	59%	40%	1%	--	47%	52%	1%	**	50%	50%	1%	**